

Hafa Adai!

Marianas Flower Festival a huge success. **PAGE 2**
Military gearing up for annual IRT training. **PAGE 3**

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Inmate allegedly raped inside cell

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

A Department of Corrections inmate was allegedly sexually assaulted in her cell while incarcerated and DOC administration is currently looking into the matter.

Without going into details, DOC Commissioner Anthony Torres shared that he is investigating the recent claims made by a DOC inmate that she was sexually assaulted by a male inmate while they were both incarcerated at DOC.

"I want you all to know that
See INMATE on Page 4

IN RESPONSE TO US LAWMAKERS DHS upholds CNMI's discretionary parole program

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has

responded to the letter it received from U.S. lawmakers—which essentially sought the revocation of the CNMI's discretionary parole

by asking DHS to mandate visa requirements across all territories—and ultimately upheld the program.

See DHS on Page 4

Palacios: United Airlines should be considerate to people of the region

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said yesterday that United Airlines should be proud to be part of Micronesian history and should be considerate to the people of the region.

Palacios said during a press conference that when Continental Air Micronesia, the predecessor of United Airlines, served the Micronesian region and opened up the Japan market, it became a very profitable route for them.

Palacios said this Micronesian route has a history of its own and that he believes United Airlines should really be proud of that history and be considerate to the people of

See UNITED on Page 4



/FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, middle, answers questions from the media during a press conference at the Office of the Governor's conference room yesterday. Also present at the press briefing are, from left, Department of Public Works highway engineer Henry Bautista, Capital Improvement Program administrator Elizabeth S. Balajadia, DPW Secretary Ray N. Yumul, Department of Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita, and Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher A. Concepcion.

Contempt findings vs. Atalig now with OAG

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

House of Representatives

Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) has forwarded the certified statement of contempt against

former Department of Finance secretary David DLG. Atalig to the Office of the Attorney General for prosecution in the Superior Court.

In a letter addressed to Attorney General Edward Manibusan last April 3, Villagomez

certified the findings of the House Special Committee on Federal Assistance and Disaster-related Funding that cited Atalig

See CONTEMPT on Page 4



Atalig

INSIDE



BUSINESS

One example of Hyatt Regency Saipan's care is the story of its long-term mascot, a 35-year-old macaw named Sky. Sky joined the Hyatt family about 30 years ago and was engaged with its life-long partner along its guest touch points.

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WORLD

Israel's military announced Sunday it had withdrawn its forces from the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, wrapping up a key phase in its ground offensive against the Hamas militant group and bringing its troop presence in the territory to one of the lowest levels since the six-month war began.

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LIFE & STYLE

Jelly Roll won big at the 2024 CMT Music Awards Sunday night, taking home three awards at the annual event celebrating the best in country music videos.

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Local

Marianas Flower Festival a huge success

By CHRYSTAL MARINO

chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Dozens of community members and small business owners gathered last Saturday for Local Girls Marianas' very first Marianas Flower Festival at the Sugar King Park in Chinatown.

The community event was held as a celebration of flowers and floral artists, and according to Local Girl Marianas, it drew close to 20 vendors, six being flower artists. There were also special performances throughout the night. Through heavy downpours, smiles were still evident as crowds socialized in the vendors booths and enjoyed food and entertainment.

Ashley Pangelinan and Tiara Deleon Guerrero of Local Girls Marianas and Local Girls Lemonada were the women behind the festival.

The two said they really wanted to create a community event for the family and the main reason was to help stimulate the local economy through small business owners on the island.

"The reason why I invited



CHRYSTAL MARINO

The Inapu Dance Group was one of the special performers during the Marianas Flower Festival last Friday at Sugar King Park in Chinatown.

them is because graduation and wedding season is just around the corner. I want the community to see what they can offer. They can take pre-orders for graduation if they fall in love with these artists' crafts. It's also good to meet the artists behind social media. It's really nice to see to put one and two together," said Pangelinan.

As an artist and small business owner herself, she noted that sometimes the challenges of owning a small business is

that purchases are very seasonal so she wanted to do the best she could to show support for her fellow entrepreneurs.

"Tiara Deleon Guerrero and I want the community to thrive as well as our local small businesses and local artists. I know that local artists like myself—I run Pulani Crown—we are just seasonal and we don't make money every month, but we do have months that we're busy like graduations or weddings. That's the only time I'm busy. Me and Tiara,

we also wear many hats. We sell lemonadas every weekend at Sabalu Market or any pop-up and local events that invite us."

She shared that since many small business owners do not have a store front, events like the Flower Festival help new businesses get out into the public and community. She also expressed her gratitude for all who came out to join the festival.

"We're going to try to make it an annual thing. I feel like it's such a successful night so it looks like it's going to happen," said Pangelinan.

The Saipan Mayor's Office also partnered with Local Girls Marianas to assist with the logistics for the event and provided the venue for the festival.

Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho told *Saipan Tribune* that when the group came to him with their proposal, he loved the idea and agreed without hesitation.

"I'm very impressed. The turnout is pretty good and it really shows the community has been waiting for this kind of event. And not only that, it shows the talent. They're imaginative, creative, and drive the initiative. I'm really looking forward to work with this organizer and see how we can do it and continue this type of event here in our community."

Local content creators Palm Trio was also recognized for their involvement in the event and in the raffle prizes "The Local Girls Marianas are actually the ones who conceptualize the whole thing. We were just here to help market and gather some businesses. It's because we just need more things to do and then also to support our small businesses because I know that we're in a time right now where the economy is really slow and small businesses help boost that," said Loyd Lely of Palm Trio.

Saipan Tribune also interviewed some vendors and they expressed grati-



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Mary Sablan and Tori Weaver of Flores de Maria and Sophia's Creations pose for a photo during the Marianas Flower Festival last Friday at Sugar King Park in Chinatown.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Pepz and Dezz of iRie Scents pose for a photo during the Marianas Flower Festival last Friday at Sugar King Park in Chinatown.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Tanya Salas of Tahine's Creations poses for a photo during the Marianas Flower Festival last Friday at Sugar King Park in Chinatown.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Local Girls Lemonada's Tiara Deleon Guerrero poses for a photo during the Marianas Flower Festival last Friday at Sugar King Park in Chinatown.

tude for the event.

"It feels great being surrounded by the community. I'm residing and working in Guam. So, I just came here after I saw the post about the Flower Festival and I had to be a part of it. Making mods and lathes are one of my hobbies. We do it together and do it to bond and make extra cash on the side. It's really nice and I'm

so grateful that they created this festival to bring the community together," said Mary Sablan, who together with Tori Weaver, owns Flores de Maria and Sophia's Creations.

Tanya Salas of Tahine's Creations echoed the same thoughts, adding that as a small business owner she is grateful for events like the Flower Festival. "I love it," she said.

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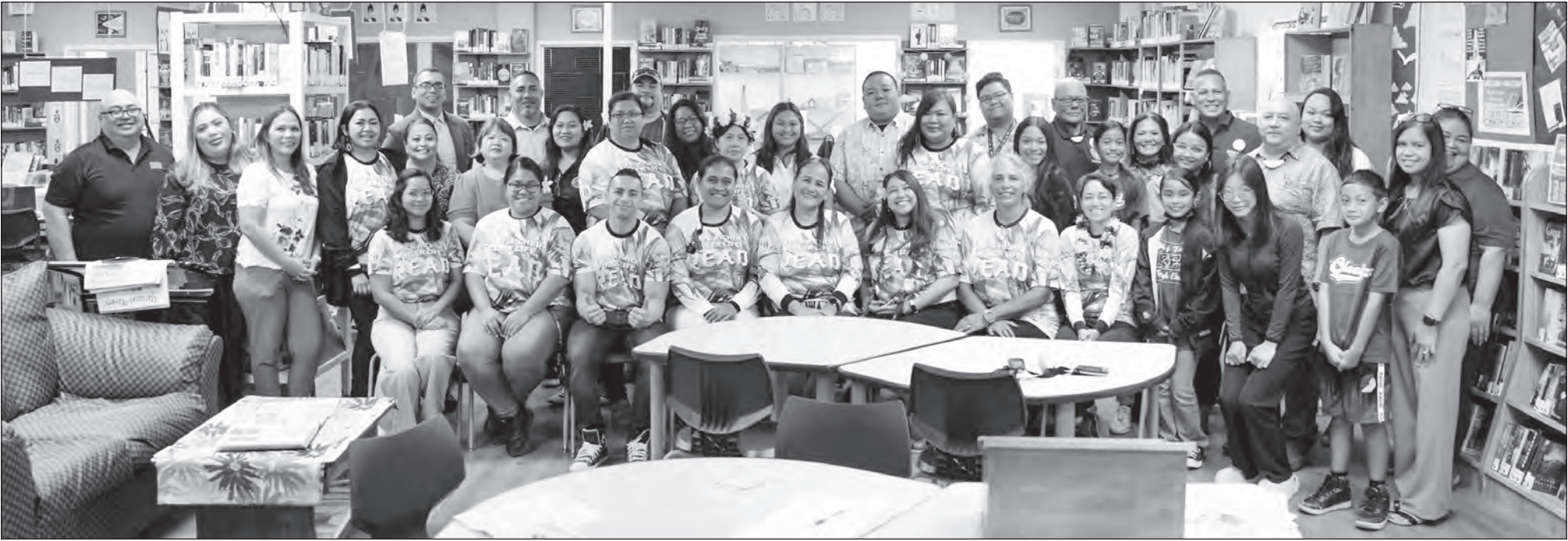
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SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH

The Public School System's team of school librarians and library aides gather on April 3 at Kagman High School's library following Board of Education chair Herman Atalig's proclamation that declared April as the PSS Library Month. Atalig was joined by Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho and other PSS personnel in the event. In his proclamation, Atalig called upon "all public school students, administrators, and the entire PSS, Parent Teacher Student Association Organizations, and community member to observe and celebrate with appropriate programs, activities, and ceremonies supporting this year's School Library Month."

PSS

Military gearing up for annual IRT training

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The United States military is gearing up to launch its annual Innovative Readiness Training Operation Wellness this coming June.

Last week, military personnel came out to Saipan in preparation of the upcoming IRT Operation Wellness which is set to begin on June 8.

IRT Operation Wellness, which essentially provides

medical services to members of the local community, is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense,

IRT's program manager, U.S. Army Reserve Command Maj. Daniel LaVorgna, said that after the turnout of last year's two-week exercise, they have decided to expand this year's operation to a month.

Last year, the IRT team provided services to over 3,000 patients.

To accommodate such a large exercise, the military will be deploying 150 servicemembers from the U.S. Army, the U.S. Army Reserve, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Air National Guard.

Specifically, the IRT team deployed to Saipan from June 8 to June 28 will provide medical services including health screening, dental care, behavioral health counseling and screening, optometry with eyeglass fabrication, and vet-

erinary care to members of the community on Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

LaVorgna said the IRT mission is a training opportunity for participating specialized servicemembers.

For his part, special assistant for Military Affairs, Daniel Aquino, thanked the IRT team whose members came from great distances—one even as far as Alaska.

He also thanked Gov. Ar-

nold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang for their full support for the mission for the people of the CNMI.

He said the IRT mission will help ensure that the CNMI community is healthy.

CNMI getting \$24.3M from EPA for water, wastewater

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The CNMI is receiving \$24.3 million in Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water grants for Fiscal Year 2024 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to continue the upgrades to the municipal drinking water and wastewater systems and fortify stormwater protections, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) over the weekend.

Sablan said in his e-kilili newsletter that the EPA announced Wednesday that the Marianas FY 2024 annual allocation for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund plus additional funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law including the Emerging Contaminant program totals \$15,597,000.

Sablan said the Marianas Drinking Water SRF S allocations plus BIL funding for FY 2024 is \$8,668,000.

He said this brings to a total of \$24,265,000 in Water and Safe Drinking Water grants for the CNMI.

The delegate said allotments for the Marianas and other insular areas are based

on the 1.5% set aside for the Marianas and other insular areas from the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act funds.

"I was first able to raise the set-aside for our areas to 1.5% in annual appropriations in 2010, though statutorily we are only eligible for 0.25% and 0.33%, respectively, from the two laws," Sablan said.

On Nov. 15, 2021, President Joseph Biden signed the Infrastructure and Jobs Act, also referred to as the BIL, which provides \$50 billion to the EPA to strengthen the nation's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure—the single largest investment in water that the federal government has ever made.

Last Wednesday, acting EPA assistant administrator Bruno Pigott sent a memorandum to Region 1 to 10 Water Division directors that provides final allotment for the FY 2024 BIL SRF Supplemental and Emerging Contaminants Capitalization Grants, as well as from the fund appropriated under the Consolidated Appropriations Act for the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRFs.

Pigott said to date, the EPA

has awarded over \$12 billion in BIL SRF funding to states, territories, and tribes.



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Last week, military personnel came out to Saipan in preparation of the upcoming IRT Operation Wellness which is set to begin on June 8. IRT Operation Wellness, which essentially provides medical services to members of the local community, is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB), hereby give notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, **at 8 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board of Professional Licensing Conference Room, BPL Building on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (03/13/2024)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
- VII. Director's Report
 - 1. Financial Report
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - A. Governor's Office
 - B. Legislature
 - 1. Letter from EAGI Chairwoman, Senator Celina R. Babauta Re Senate Confirmation Hearing for Dr. Martin Rohringer
- X. Old Business
- XI. New Business
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- XV. Announcements
 - A. Next Meeting Date
 - B. Adjournment of Meeting

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Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on **Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room, on Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (11/29/2023)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
- VII. Director's Report
 - A. Financial Report
 - B. Online Payment - Localgov
 - C. Ad Hoc Committee to Review and Update Board Regulations for Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors, and Landscape Architects
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - A. Governor's Office
 - B. Legislature
- X. Old Business
- XI. New Business
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
 - A. NCARB 2024 Annual Business Meeting - Paid and Voting Delegates
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- XV. Announcements
 - A. Next Meeting Date
 - B. Adjournment of Meeting

Senate confirms appointment of Marciano, Dela Cruz

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Senate confirmed yesterday the appointment of retired teacher Luella Ichihara Marciano and former Department of Commerce secretary Pedro Q. Dela Cruz to serve as a resident executive for the Indigenous Affairs Office and as a member of the Marianas Public Land Trust board of trustees, respectively.

All eight senators present at yesterday’s special Senate session voted “yes” to adopt the Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee reports that recommend the confirmation of the appointment of Marciano and Dela Cruz. Sen. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan) was absent, but excused from the session.

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the



Luella Ichihara Marciano and Pedro Q. Dela Cruz shake hands after the Senate confirmed their appointment yesterday. Marciano was appointed to serve as a resident executive for the Indigenous Affairs Office, while Dela Cruz was appointed to serve as a member of the Marianas Public Land Trust board of trustees.

EAGI Committee, said before the voting that Marciano is one of the most unique nominees for the resident executive position that she has ever come across in her many years of government employment.

Babauta said Marciano

brings a unique perspective, shaped by her bi-cultural background.

“She is multilingual. She is native. She is indigenous. She is a Northern Marianas descent,” the senator said.

Babauta said Marciano’s

nomination by Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, who himself is bi-cultural, sends a powerful message that the CNMI government reflects diversity and inclusion.

On Dela Cruz’s appointment to MPLT board representing Rota, Babauta said aside from obtaining his undergraduate degree in economics and sociology from Western New Mexico University, the nominee’s vast experience in many areas of government makes him a perfect candidate to serve as a trustee of the MPLT.

The senator said during the Trust Territory era, Dela Cruz served as the assistant district economic development officer and chief of the economic division.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

Sanitary inspections of food establishments for March 2024

During the month of March, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.’s Environmental Health Disease Prevention conducted sanitary inspections on retail, eating, and drinking establishments. Through this release, EHDP is providing names of establishments by inspection grade and names of establishments which were ordered to close for serious violations of health and sanitation standards. For these establishments, EHDP provides the suspension date and the date they were certified to resume operations.

Classifications for Food Safety Rating for an establishment receiving a score of:

- 0-10 Demerits Grade A
- 11-20 Demerits Grade B
- 21-30 Demerits Grade C
- >30 closure/suspension

Saipan Grade A

1. Summer snow, Susupe
2. New LC Market, Gualo Rai
3. LJ’s Butcher and Packing Facility, Gualo Rai
4. Sister Market, San Antonio
5. Aiko’s Deli, Susupe
6. X.K Market, Chalan Kanoa
7. Eastern KTV & Bar, Garapan
8. J’s Restaurant, Gualo Rai
9. Chinen Ice Candy, Garapan
10. Boss Karaoke, Garapan
11. The Angry Penne, Garapan
12. Tropical Drinking Water, San Antonio
13. CHCC Cafeteria, Lower Navy Hill
14. Roller Skates Café’s, San Antonio
15. Garapan Restaurant, Garapan
16. New CK Market, Chalan Kanoa
17. Korea House Restaurant, Susupe
18. The Old B Bank, Garapan
19. Aiko’s Dandan Deli & Latte Café’s, Dandan
20. Country House Restaurant,

- Garapan
21. Savory Bistro Café’s, Garapan
22. 6JMS Bar, Garapan
23. Kensington Hotel Saipan, all (outlets), San Roque
24. Maiana Breeze, Gualo Rai
25. Subway Restaurant, Chalan Piao
26. Genpro Wholesale, San Antonio
27. LSG Sky Chef, all (outlets), Airport Road
28. Mama’s Kitchen, Kagman
29. Everest Kitchen, Garapan
30. Zoom Café’s, Susupe

Tinian Grade A

1. K-Town Coffee
2. Tinian Ice & Water Bottling Co.
3. Tinian Ice & Water Bottling Co. Retail
4. Kerida’s Restaurant & BBQ

Saipan Grade B

1. Free Town Wholesale, San Antonio
2. Marianas Light House Restaurant, Navy Hill

Tinian Grade B

1. Tian Hong Retail Store/Slicer
2. Island Store

Saipan Grade C

1. Matty’s BBQ & Catering, As Lito

Tinian Grade C

1. Oriental Restaurant

Establishment(s) ordered closed for serious violations of health and sanitation standards.

■ Kensington Main Kitchen, San Roque 03/12/2024-03/15/2024

■ Judy’s Café, As Lito 03/27/2024, pending for reopening.

For more information, contact the EHDP office at (670) 236-2022/27/28, or email the administrator of EHDP, John Tagabuel, at john.tagabuel@chcc.health. (PR)

UNITED

From page 1

the region.

He said they can only ask United for their consideration as their ticket prices are private, corporate decisions.

“I’m hoping that that with the new awareness of our people now, you know, pushing back and or requesting United to lower its price, I hope that United would give that consideration,” said the governor at the press briefing held in the Office of the Governor’s conference room.

Palacios said the people were subsidizing United during the COVID-19 pan-

demic, but the pandemic is not here anymore yet their prices never went back down.

He said the prices not just hurt the traffic between here and Guam for example, but also to Japan and other travels beyond Guam.

Palacios said his wife was really telling him that United’s round trip ticket to Guam is \$580 and not \$300.

Dan Weiss, who is the United Airlines managing director for Global Government and Regulatory Affairs, told the CNMI Legislature last week that they offer residents of the CNMI and Guam access to a “resident” fare of \$302 round-trip for basic economy and

\$402 round-trip for standard economy, both fares excluding taxes and fees.

Palacios said it really impacts the economic opportunities for tourism and travel between the people from Guam and the CNMI, and even with the increasing number of military personnel for R&R to the Commonwealth.

The governor said he is glad that community members Jessie Torres and Glen Hunter started an online petition to put this awareness on the table to United Airlines.

The online petition is demanding United Airlines, Attorney General Edward Manibusan, U.S. Department of

Transportation, and the Department of Justice do something about these hefty ticket prices.

Palacios also thanked Guam Lt. Gov. Joshua Tenorio for helping support this push for U.S. Congress to create a federal cabotage exemption for the CNMI, as this is not just Saipan, Guam issue/problem, as it’s also a problem throughout Micronesia from Guam.

“Can you imagine how much it costs to fly from Guam to Palau, Chuuk, Pohnpei. This is a regional issue,” he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

DHS

From page 1

Back in November 2023, a group of U.S. lawmakers banded together to ask the U.S. DHS to mandate visa requirements across all territories which would’ve essentially revoked the CNMI’s discretionary parole program.

Back in 2019, DHS authorized a discretionary parole program for the CNMI only, which essentially allows Chinese tourists to visit the CNMI for two weeks without having to obtain a non-immigrant visa.

Last week, DHS assistant

secretary for Legislative Affairs Zephrañie Buetow responded to the letter upholding the law that created the discretionary parole program in the first place; Public Law 110-229, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008, or the CNRA.

“A foreign citizen generally must obtain a visa to enter the United States, including its territories. However, Public Law 110-229, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (CNRA), established the Guam-Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Visa Waiver Program codified at Immigration and Nationality Act § 212(l).

Specifically, DHS notes that under the CNRA, DHS was required to identify countries that benefitted the CNMI economically and whatever country met the threshold, the CNRA authorizes nationals from said countries to travel to the CNMI without a visa. The People’s Republic of China, which makes up 40% of the CNMI’s tourist market, met the threshold.

“The CNRA requires DHS to identify countries from which the CNMI receives a ‘significant economic benefit’ from the number of visitors for pleasure within the year preceding enactment. The

department determined the People’s Republic of China met this economic threshold in 2009. Pursuant to the authority under the CNRA, as of Oct. 3, 2019, PRC nationals may travel to the CNMI without a visa for the purpose of a temporary visit for business or pleasure for up to 14 days; they are not authorized for employment. Individuals without a visa are not authorized to travel to other parts of the United States, including Guam,” said Buetow.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

INMATE

From page 1

I take all allegations and investigations related to this claim very seriously. Rest assured my department along with the Department of Public Safety are diligently looking into this matter or any other related

matters,” Torres said.

When asked for additional information and possibly details about the case, he said he could not comment further.

“Given there is a pending investigation, I can’t comment any further,” he said.

Meanwhile, *Saipan Tribune* learned from multiple credible sources that last week, a female

inmate was allegedly sexually assaulted after a male inmate managed to enter her cell.

It was only after a roll call and inspection that the two were found together in the woman’s cell.

When officers found the two inmates, the female inmate claimed she was forced into sexual activity with the

male inmate and DPS was called in to investigate.

Last April 2, *Saipan Tribune* learned that the female was brought to the Commonwealth Health Center to be treated and evaluated.

An investigation was launched shortly after she was brought to CHC for an evaluation.

CONTEMPT

From page 1

in contempt; first for failing to answer questions pursuant to a subpoena, and second for interfering with the operation and function of the House Special Committee on Federal Assistance and Disaster-Related Funding.

“I have reviewed the special committee’s report, and...I hereby certify this statement of contempt to the office of the Attorney General for the purpose of prosecuting Mr. Atalig in the Commonwealth Superior court,” the letter states.

According to the letter, on March 12 to 13, the House Special Committee on Federal Assistance and Disaster-Related Funding held an investigatory hearing pursuant to a subpoena ad testificandum that was issued to former finance secretary Atalig.

“Mr. Atalig appeared at the Special Committee meeting and was asked questions related to his involvement in the BOOST Program. In response to most of the preliminary and non-self-incriminating questions, Mr. Atalig invoked his Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination and also cited CNMI Constitution Article 1, Section 4©,” said Villagomez.

Several committee members, Villagomez said, verbally advised Atalig that his failure to answer their questions would violate 1 CMC § 1306. In addition, committee chair Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) also advised Atalig that the special committee’s questions did not elicit any self-incriminating answers or information.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

NMC student named New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar

Northern Marianas College pre-engineering student Ejay Aguirre has been recently named as a 2024 New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar by the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and will receive a \$2,250 scholarship. Aguirre's selection was based on the score he earned in the All-USA Academic Team competition, for which more than 2,200 applications were received this year.

Top-scoring students from Canada, the United States, and sovereign nations with Phi Theta Kappa chapters are selected annually as New Century Transfer Pathway Scholars. The program is sponsored by the Coca-Cola Foundation and the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, with additional support provided by the American Association of Community Colleges and Phi Theta Kappa.

"The honor of being named the New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar is a recognition of a great impact," Aguirre said. "It symbolizes not just an achievement, but



Northern Marianas College student Ejay Aguirre, right, shakes hands with NMC dean of Student Support Services Charlotte Cepeda at the PTK Honor Society Induction Ceremony held in October 2023.

a commitment and a promise to make the most of every opportunity. This opportunity would not have been achievable without the help of Ms. Kaelani Demapan, professor Willson Gaul, and the Phi Theta

Kappa Society for providing a clean application process and opportunities of growth. I am deeply thankful for this promise and I look forward to the journey ahead!"

The student with the high-

est All-USA Academic Team application score in each state is named either a New Century Workforce Pathway Scholar or a New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar. Students nominated for the Workforce

Pathway should plan to enter the workforce after completing a certificate or associate degree, while those nominated for the Transfer Pathway should plan to transfer to a four-year college after graduation.

The program annually recognizes 104 Scholars. Each New Century Workforce Pathway Scholar receives special recognition at the Association of Community College Trustees Congress, while each New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar receives special recognition at the American Association of Community Colleges Convention.

About PTK

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society is the international honor society for students seeking associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, or other college credentials. Its headquarters is in Jackson, Mississippi, and it boasts more than 3.5 million members in nearly 1,300 chapters across 10 nations.

For more information about NMC's local PTK chapter, contact Project PROA director and PTK Society advisor Kaelani Demapan at kaelani.demapan@marianas.edu. (PR)

US Labor urges Guam's construction industry to take part in new survey

DEDED0, Guam—The U.S. Department of Labor encourages construction industry employers in Guam to participate in a survey to help establish accurate prevailing wage rates and reduce the need for contractors to seek additional labor classifications.

Administered by the department's Wage and Hour Division, the survey seeks information about wages and fringe benefits paid to construction workers on residential, building, heavy and highway construction projects in Guam between May 1, 2023, and April 30, 2024. This survey is not limited to federally funded construction projects and its completion is required by the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts.

The data collection period begins May 1, 2024, and ends on Aug. 1, 2024.

Federal law directs the department to set the prevailing wage rates that reflect the actual wages and fringe benefits paid to construction workers where the work takes place. The department depends on

participation by contractors and other interested parties to ensure prevailing wages and wage determinations are as accurate as possible and that employers are supplied with the best possible guidance.

The division encourages employers to complete the survey online. It will send notification letters to interested parties and contractors of which the agency knows. Contractors and other interested parties may participate even if they have not received a survey participation letter.

If you have questions about the survey process and forms, please contact the Davis-Bacon Survey Center at (866) 236-2773 or davisbaconinfo@dol.gov.

People interested in getting more information about this survey can also register to attend one of two free, online briefings held on May 7 and May 9, that will describe the survey process and offer instructions for completing the survey. Learn more about the surveys. (PR)

JRM commander promoted to two-star flag officer

ASAN, Guam—Joint Region Marianas Commander Rear Adm. (lower half) Greg Huffman was promoted to the rank of rear admiral (upper half) during a ceremony administered by U.S. Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Samuel Paparo last Wednesday, April 3, at the PACFLT Headquarters on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

"It is an honor and privilege to continue to serve this great nation and our Pacific Islands," said Huffman. "This is an exciting time for Guam and Micronesia and I am looking forward to continuing to advance the very important mission of supporting the warfighter and defending the homeland."

As part of his promotion, the two-star admiral will assume a new role to lead the activation of Joint Task Force Micronesia.

Huffman will be designated the senior military official



US NAVY
Rear Adm. Gregory Huffman, commander, Joint Region Marianas, left, recites the oath of office during a ceremony administered by Adm. Samuel Paparo, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, April 3, 2024.

for the Joint Operations Area, which includes Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

"The Indo-Pacific region is a dynamic area of operation and vital to our security and prosperity. I remain committed to building on the progress we've achieved through

our partnerships with federal, state and local governments throughout this region."

Joint Task Force Micronesia will be responsible for the homeland defense of Guam, the CNMI, FSM and the Republic of Palau to include defense support to civil authorities, and will provide foreign humanitarian assistance throughout the compact states

in times of crisis.

During a change of command ceremony scheduled for some time in June, Rear Adm. (lower half) Michael DeVore will officially take command of Joint Region Marianas. DeVore is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Surface Forces/Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, San Diego, California. (PR)



US NAVY
Rear Adm. Gregory Huffman, commander, Joint Region Marianas, left, recites the oath of office during a ceremony administered by Adm. Samuel Paparo, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, April 3, 2024.



US NAVY
Rear Adm. Gregory Huffman, commander, Joint Region Marianas has his shoulder boards changed by his spouse during a promotion ceremony for Huffman on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, April 3, 2024.

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

6.7-magnitude quake near Agrihan

At 9:03pm on April 5, 2024, an earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 6.7 occurred about 23 miles north of Agrihan. Some areas in the Marianas may have experienced shaking.

Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

4.9-magnitude quake in Marianas

At 5:29am on April 5, 2024, a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Mariana Islands region. Currently, there

are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

4.8-magnitude quake on Saipan

At 9:49 PM on April 6, 2024, a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred at 153 kilometers east-northeast of Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Happy birthday, NATO. If Trump gets back to the White House, it might be your last

This week, a contingent of U.S. dignitaries is in Brussels, Belgium, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. A centerpiece of the commemoration is the unveiling of a statue of Independence's own Harry Truman, the American president who oversaw the creation of this vital international government and military alliance that has served as the West's buffer against Russian aggression for decades.

It's difficult to overstate the importance of NATO to the world order and relative stability that we in the West have enjoyed for most of our lifetimes. And we can never, ever take it for granted.

First, a little history lesson: President Truman made one of the most consequential decisions any world leader had ever faced when he dropped two nuclear bombs and ended the carnage of World War II. But one of the Allies who helped win that war, the Soviet Union, did not share America and Great Britain's devotion to democracy. Truman, U.K. Prime Minister Winston Churchill and other leaders rightly viewed revolutionary Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin as bent on world domination, posing as great a threat to liberty as the German Nazi and Imperial Japanese forces they had just defeated.

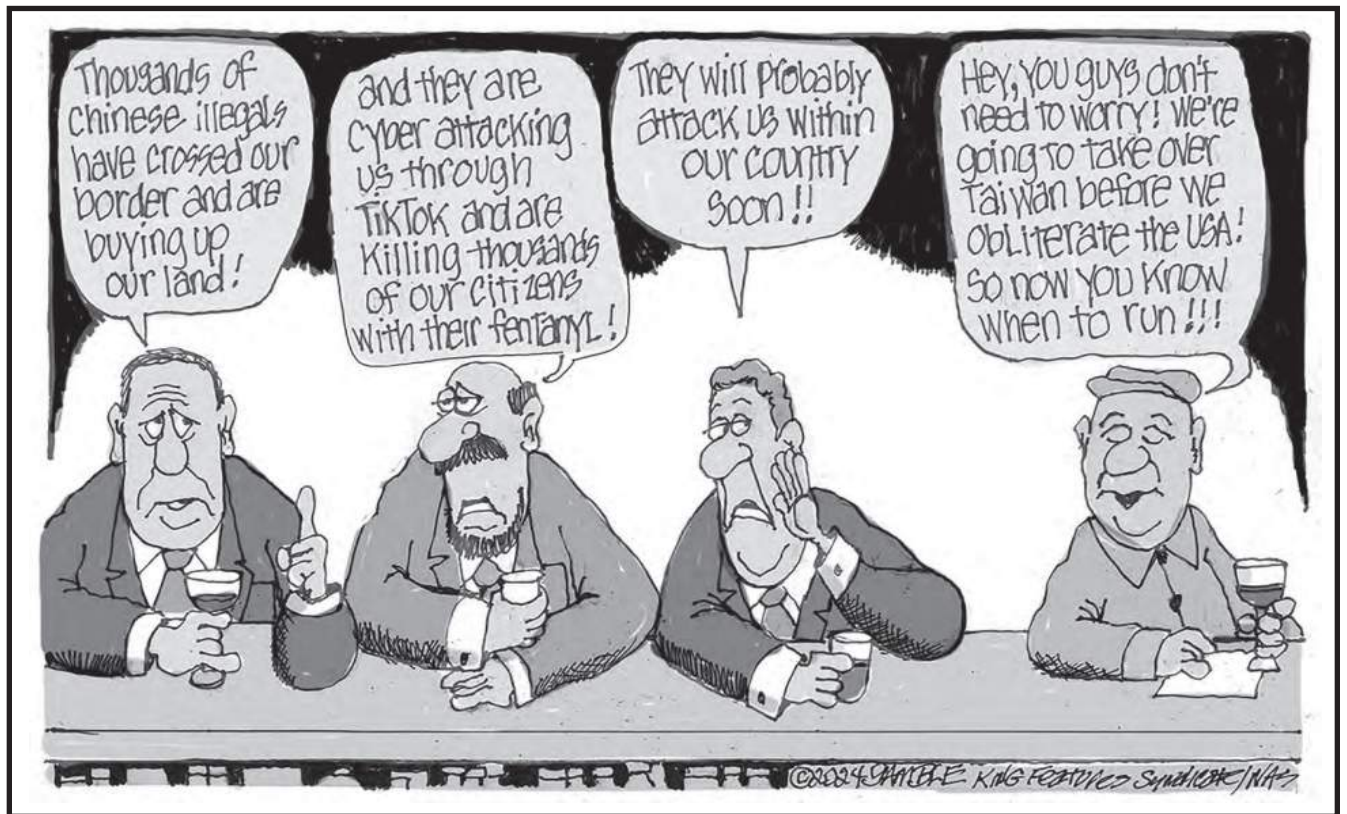
In a 1947 speech to Congress, the president laid out his Truman Doctrine—"America's answer to the surge of expansion of Communist tyranny"—and the Cold War was on. And on April 4, 1949, NATO was formed with 12 founding nations making a pledge: If one ally is attacked, all allies are attacked. Today, its membership has grown to 32, with Russia's neighbors Sweden and Finland signing on only recently.

"NATO and the other elements of President Truman's post-war arsenal largely kept the peace throughout the Cold War and continues to protect democracy and perpetuate peace," said Alex Burden, executive director of the Truman Library Institute, who is in Belgium this week for NATO's birthday along with Kurt Graham, library director, and Clifton Truman Daniel, the president's grandson. "It is a vital part of President Truman's enduring legacy of leadership."

Make no mistake: Russia's expansionist appetite is not a thing of the past. President Vladimir Putin believes Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika reforms were a mistake. He has dominated his country's political and strategic direction for decades, and his 2012 invasion of Ukraine was a key strategy to expand its waning influence—"hoping to restore the glory days of the Soviet Union in the 1950s, when it was at the peak of its power," in the words of Politico reporter Gabriel Gavin.

Openly admiration of dictators, authoritarians

And unfortunately, Donald Trump has a dictator envy problem. The 91-times-indicted ex-president who was found le-

See **HAPPY** on Page 7

A belligerent China is bringing out East Asia's resolve

In less than two weeks, President Joe Biden will greet Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in Washington for the first trilateral summit of the three leaders. According to the White House, the summit seeks to boost economic cooperation, advance alternative supply chains and "further peace and security in the Indo-Pacific and around the world."

But make no mistake about it. This summit is really about one thing and one thing only: China.

The Asian superpower has been flexing its muscles in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost in its entirety. Chinese and Philippine vessels have engaged in numerous unarmed clashes in the key waterway, with the People's Liberation Army, or PLA, coast guard obstructing Philippine ships from resupplying sailors based on the Second Thomas Shoal, less than 200 nautical miles west of the Philippines' main island of Palawan.

On March 23, Chinese ships used water cannons on a Philippine ship traversing the waterway, injuring three crew members. This was the fourth time since November Beijing employed water cannons, and it was serious enough from Washington's perspective for the State Department to declare that any armed attack against Philippine ships anywhere in the South China Sea could compel the U.S. to invoke the Mutual Defense Treaty on behalf of Manila. Chinese officials, meanwhile, predictably blame the Philippines for sailing into its territorial waters—an assertion everybody but China rejects.

For Marcos, China's repeated provocations are a reaffirmation that shifting toward the U.S. was the right call. His predecessor, the pugnacious and curse-happy Rodrigo Duterte, was far more interested in getting closer to Beijing, betting that a better relationship with the Asian powerhouse would boost the Philippines' economy. Duterte's flirtations didn't pay off. Marcos came into office in 2022 and tore up the playbook, placing his chips into bettering Manila's 73-year-old alliance with Washington.

Since then, the U.S.-Philippines alliance has gotten deeper and more interconnected, driven by a mutual antagonism toward China's assertiveness. In February 2023, Marcos signed a defense deal with Washington that gave the U.S. access to four more bases in the Philippines, one of which is in Luzon, which sits directly south of Taiwan and could presumably be used in the event of a conflict on the island. U.S. and Philippine naval exercises are now common.

Manila is also taking its own initiative. A few months ago, Marcos' administration pledged to spend an additional \$35 billion over the next decade on weapons systems and naval platforms designed to defend its maritime claims in the South China Sea.

The Philippines is hardly the only country in East Asia boosting its defense spending. Japan, for instance, will increase its defense budget by 16% this year, bringing it to \$56 billion—the highest ever. Japan's Kishida has followed in the footsteps of the late prime minister, Shinzo Abe, and in some respects exceeded Abe's ambitions.

Japan is developing what Japanese military officials refer to as counterstrike capabilities, or medium-range missiles that could place Chinese and North Korean military targets at risk. The Japa-

By **DANIEL DEPETRIS**

Chicago Tribune

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.



nese military is strengthening its presence on the southern island of Yonaguni, which is a little more than 100 miles away from Taiwan.

Tokyo has also become far sterner in its language on the Taiwan issue; true or not, Japanese officials are increasingly concerned that a successful Chinese invasion of Taiwan could presumably pave the way for Chinese aggression against Japan's smaller islands to the south or even the Senkakus, a chain of uninhabited islets claimed by both Beijing and Tokyo.

Japan and the Philippines are improving bilateral relations as well. China is the glue that holds the budding ties together. In December, Japan delivered a radar system to Manila, with two more expected. Japanese and Philippine officials are in the middle of negotiating a reciprocal access agreement, which would allow forces of both nations to enter each other's territories for joint military exercises and relationship-building. This isn't the first access agreement for Japan, which finalized similar deals with India in September 2020, the United Kingdom in January 2023 and Australia in August 2023.

The U.S. is no doubt a key influencer of these events. The Biden administration has stated in a robotic-like fashion that China is its biggest competitor. The Pentagon has referred to China as its "pacing threat," a phrase that suggests that it's Washington trying to keep up with Beijing rather than the other way around.

All of the latest developments will bring a smile to the faces of U.S. officials.

But we shouldn't overstate U.S. influence either. In a way, today's middle powers in Asia are doing what middle powers have done for centuries: taking stock of the security dynamics in their own region and doing what they can to ensure the balance of power continues to be favorable. Or, at the very least, stable. Most of the time, this translates into building relations with regional states holding similar threat perceptions, pouring more resources into the defense budget and ensuring military capabilities are in place if the absolute worst happens.

Some foreign policy commentators and China hawks are deathly worried about Chinese hegemony in Asia, particularly if the PLA took Taiwan by force. But the actions of Japan, the Philippines and other countries such as Australia, India and even Vietnam suggest that Chinese hegemony—assuming Beijing even has the capacity to attain it in a region with such challenging geography—won't be the cakewalk so many make it out to be.

Nations typically don't roll over when they're facing an aspiring hegemon. They defend what's theirs.

The more belligerent China becomes, the more resistance it will likely confront.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Conspiracy theories fly after Baltimore bridge collapse. It wasn't always this way

I vividly remember the gruesome wreckage of the United States' worst aviation disaster. I was among the first reporters to see the burning remnants of a DC-10 near O'Hare International Airport on May 25, 1979. The crash killed all 271 people on board and two people on the ground.

What I don't recall are absurd conspiracy theories about why American Airlines Flight 191 to Los Angeles dropped from the sky and exploded after takeoff, incinerating people beyond recognition.

It's a universe from last week's Baltimore bridge collapse. As detailed by NewsGuard and PolitiFact, we encountered these nonsensical claims: The cargo ship was the victim of a cyberattack that caused a power loss; the collapse was a false flag to divert us from the police raid of rap mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs' Miami home as part of a sex trafficking investigation; and it was Israeli revenge for the U.S. abstaining from a United Nations resolution calling for a Gaza cease-fire.

And these: The Russians did it because the ship captain was Ukrainian (he was not); the crash was predicted in a Barack and Michelle Obama-produced Netflix movie; and Senate Minority Leader Mitchell McConnell's late sister-in-law was somehow at fault, an assertion premised on the erroneous claim that she worked for the cargo ship's Singapore owner.

Conspicuous, too, are politicians—apparently all Republicans—who blame diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, programs. Phil Lyman, a Republican Utah state representative, took to X to say the collapse “is what happens when you have governors who prioritize diversity over the well-being and security of citizens.”

Lyman additionally posted the message “DEI=DIE” and retweeted a nasty post that targeted the first and only Black woman on the Maryland Port Commission. Anthony Sabatini, a Republican congressional candidate in Florida, posted on X a video of the collapse with the words “DEI did this.”

In a more genteel cultural and media universe, before the internet, social media and cable news networks, there wasn't this loathsome nonsense. What happened to Flight 191 was made clear quickly: The 9,000-pound engine and pylon, which con-

nected the engine to the left wing, fell over the top of the wing and to the runway on takeoff.

The National Transportation Safety Board concluded that it was all a result of the failure of a pylon damaged by a forklift during an engine change in Oklahoma City two months earlier. The nation accepted the judgment of a government agency (with Jimmy Carter, a liberal Democrat, no less, as president).

More seemingly comparable, however, to Baltimore is the 2007 collapse of the Interstate 35W bridge in Minneapolis. The rush-hour disaster killed 13 people and injured 145. With construction going on, more than 100 vehicles and 18 construction workers fell as far as 115 feet into the Mississippi River. Unlike Baltimore, there was no video to prove what happened.

Did the collapse inspire all kinds of fact-free speculation and conspiracy theories? It did not, confirmed Al Franken, the comic writer who was waging his first campaign for U.S. Senate at the time.

“As I recall there were no conspiracy theories bandied about. Just trusted that (the government would) get to the bottom of it. And we did,” he said.

Scott Gillespie was opinion editor of the Minneapolis Star Tribune when the I-35W bridge collapsed. There was the inherent mystery of what happened, he said, but conspiracy theories did not mushroom, even as many cities fast-tracked inspections of their bridges.

Twitter and Facebook were young, but they were around by then. Gillespie and Tony Kennedy, a Star Tribune reporter who investigated the collapse, remember a few people wondering about terrorism and explosives. But such possibilities were quickly discounted.

What one did see, Gillespie said, was a traditional blame game among politicians, with Democrats chiding a Republican governor for budgets cuts to infrastructure and not raising taxes for such expenditures.

The National Transportation Safety Board disappointed even the many who assumed that aging infrastructure and poor maintenance were to blame. Neither age nor money was responsible, it held, but rather design flaws in the 40-year-old

By **JIM WARREN**
Chicago Tribune

Jim Warren, a former managing editor of the Tribune, is executive editor of NewsGuard.



span. The gusset plates—the sheets of steel that tie girders together—should have been a half-inch thicker.

The board's conclusion remains the consensus. Again, just like Flight 191, we had an agreed-upon set of facts and confidence in a government agency. Unlike today, we would not have needed organizations regularly exposing misinformation.

“It was indeed a more quaint media ecosphere,” Gillespie said. “No crazy social media theories. Nothing driven by Twitter and prompting us to track down odd rumors.”

“Conspiracy theorists, racists and bad actors interested in using false information to achieve their goals have all been around for a long time,” said Rafael Lorente, dean of the University of Maryland's journalism school. “The difference today is that the conspiracy theorists and racists can communicate with each other and spread their lies and ugliness better and faster than ever before. And so can other bad actors.”

Lorente added: “The Baltimore bridge collapse should be an easy one. We all immediately saw video of a 1,000-foot ship hitting the bridge. Case closed. That should be all the evidence anyone needs.”

HAPPY

From page 6

gally liable for sexual abuse and massive business fraud is at the top of the Republican Party's ticket yet again. Abuse of power is his hallmark. While he was in office, he made little secret of his admiration for the world authoritarians who—they think—enjoy the fawning praise of the people they oppress.

Chinese President Xi Jinping? “He's a strong gentleman, right? Anybody that—he's a strong guy, tough guy.”

On Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán: “He's the boss and he's a great leader, fantastic leader.”

And of course, the world watched in disbelief at a 2018 summit in Helsinki, Finland, when Trump debased himself and our nation, obsequiously glad-handing Putin while denying the overwhelming conclusion his own U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia had, indeed, interfered in the 2016 election. “President Putin says it's not Russia,” said Trump. “I don't see any reason why it would be.”

The reason why not, of course, is the ex-president's shatteringly fragile ego. And our former KGB intelligence agent adversary sees his soul.

Retired Gen. John Kelly, Trump's second chief of staff, is only one of the ex-president's former protectors who are raising alarms about his authoritarian aspirations as he takes his third consecutive run at office. Trump's already told Fox News' Sean Hannity that he would be a “dictator” on “Day 1.”

So let's all quit pretending there's a difference between Trump's rhetoric and what he actually accomplishes. For all his ineptitude during his four tumultuous years in office, he still managed to install the judicial machinery to keep right-wing policy steamrolling over individual rights for years to come.

Some of Trump's fans like to compare his bomb-throwing style to the good old “Give 'em hell, Harry” spirit. Wrong. Truman wasn't a norm-buster, and was above all else an institutionalist. A clear-eyed, pragmatic leader who understood that machines fall apart if they aren't carefully maintained.

So thank Harry Truman, Churchill and the other visionaries who understood they had to come together to fight the Soviets' ambitions as a team. And, please, take Trump seriously when he vows that if he gets back to the White House and Russia invades a sovereign nation, he'll let it “do whatever the hell it wants.”

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

Villanelle Variations

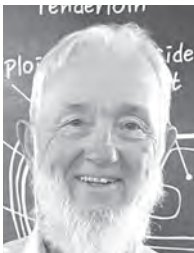
» (old) Old Age Rage (and new)
A Voting Gauge

LITERARY NOOK

By **JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka “Pepe Batbon” Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. Joey is the Poet Laureate of Tinian, celebrating 40 years in the CNMI.



Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night'

By Welsh poet Dylan Thomas in 1951

Do not go gentle into that good night
Old age should burn and rage at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning, they
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deed might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.






Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

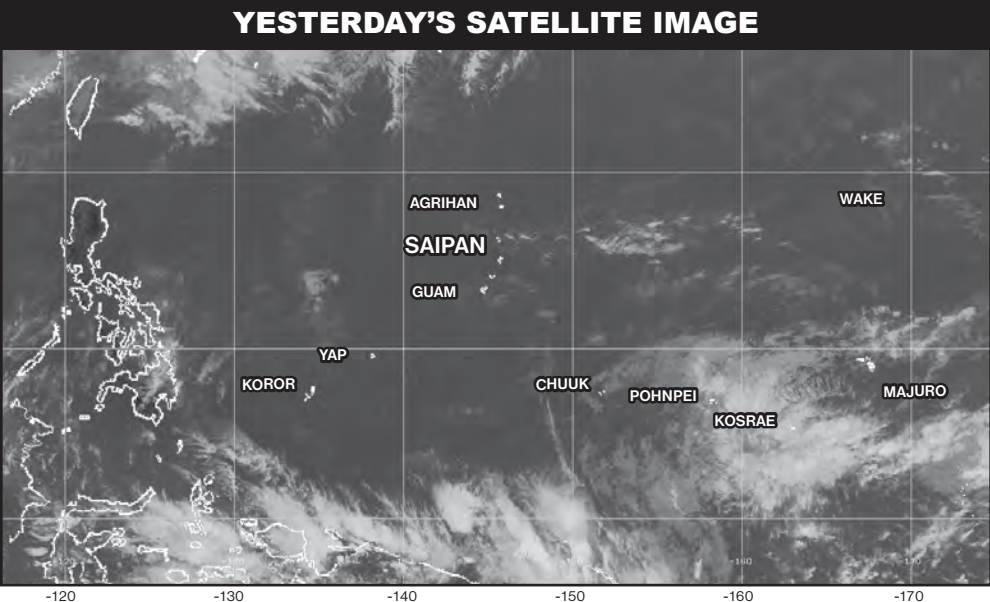
'Use the booth or write in your vote today'

By Tinian Poet Laureate, Joey Connolly, 02/26/2024

Use the booth or write in your vote today
Do not let the fear of his vitriol bite
Keep the demagogic candidate at bay
Pay no heed to all the lies he will say
Or fears from Republicans on the right
Use the booth or write in your vote today
His indictments are a judicial X-ray
\$500 million in fines are now his plight
Keep the demagogic candidate at bay
Drive or walk down, don't get feet of clay
Keep democracy always in your sight
Use the booth or write in your vote today
Stay away from the 'fear of voting' fray
Know that Power Pac might doesn't make right
Keep the demagogic candidate at bay
So please without any further delay
Get there before all the polls close tonight
Use the booth or write in your vote today

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
									
Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. east winds 15 to 25 mph.		Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Breezy. Mostly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of showers.		Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers.		Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers.	
87°	77°	86°	77°	86°	77°	86°	77°	86°	77°



PICTURE TIME: 6:39 AM MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite images indicate patchy clouds and isolated light showers across the local area. A weak shear line stretches to the east of Saipan all the way to south of Wake Island. It has been drifting westward and weakening during the past 24 to 36 hours but could trigger isolated showers over the Marianas by tonight and Tuesday. Surface winds are moderate to fresh this morning with a little stronger winds northward near Saipan. Wave models suggest combined seas of 6 to 8 feet across the region, composed mainly of east-northeast trade-wind waves, but there could be occasional higher waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Fair	88° / 78°	
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 80°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	90° / 80°	
Chuuk	Cloudy	88° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Cloudy	87° / 79°	
Kosrae	Light Rain	86° / 80°	
Majuro	Cloudy/Wind	86° / 83°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:30 PM
Wednesday	6:06 AM	6:30 PM
Thursday	6:05 AM	6:30 PM
Friday	6:04 AM	6:30 PM
Saturday	6:04 AM	6:31 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:13 AM	7:01 PM	-
Wednesday	6:58 AM	8:03 PM	-
Thursday	7:46 AM	9:05 PM	-
Friday	8:37 AM	10:08 PM	-
Saturday	9:32 AM	11:09 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	68° / 57°	
Beijing	Fair	81° / 52°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	81° / 73°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 69°	
London	Partly Cloudy	70° / 50°	
Los Angeles	Showers	57° / 50°	
Manila	Fair	94° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	72° / 55°	
Miami	Sunny	91° / 72°	
New York	Clear	58° / 42°	
Osaka	Cloudy	75° / 62°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	79° / 55°	
Busan	Cloudy	69° / 53°	
Rome	Sunny	70° / 45°	
Salem	Clear	76° / 45°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 50°	
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	74° / 47°	
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	72° / 60°	
Washington, DC	Fair	64° / 44°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
1:50 AM	Low Tide	0.42	
7:40 AM	High Tide	2.08	
2:19 PM	Low Tide	0.04	
8:35 PM	High Tide	2.07	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 1, 2024				
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174 8:00AM 8:45AM Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN
UA824	7:10AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825 9:25PM 1:50AM+1 2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	PR110 10:30PM 4:25AM+1 Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184 10:25PM 4:10AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	UA192 10:25PM 6:15AM+1 2, 5 via Palau
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA192/174 10:25PM 8:45AM+1 2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174 10:25PM 8:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	7C2306/3406 11:10PM 3:10PM+1 Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN
TW308	3:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406 9:30AM 3:10PM Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW307 8:30PM 2:15AM+1 Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3404 10:10PM 3:40AM+1 Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.					
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024					
SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business

Hyatt Regency Saipan relocates mascot Sky to Guam

Over the past over 65 years, care has been at the heart of everything that Hyatt does. As the world evolves and new challenges emerge, Hyatt has advanced its global Environmental, Social and Governance strategy through World of Care.

Deeply embedded across all areas of its business, World of Care brings Hyatt's purpose of care to life. Its goals, particularly in the areas of social and environmental sustainability were defined by understanding what is important to its colleagues, guests, customers, owners, investors, and communities.

One example of Hyatt Regency Saipan's care is the story of its long-term mascot, a 35-year-old macaw named Sky.

Sky joined the Hyatt Regency Saipan family about 30 years ago and was engaged with its life-long partner along its guest touch points. Sky was the center stage and indeed created positive memories while being photographed by countless guests over the years.

During the global pandemic, Sky's partner unfortunately passed away, leaving Sky in solitude for nearly two years. While the Hyatt team took very good care of Sky throughout the time with evidently bonding behaviors, Hyatt no longer supports any form of tourism activity or entertainment that infringes on the well-being of any animal.



Dr. Whitney Collins during her health check-up conducted on Sky.

Since Saipan does not offer a veterinarian, zoologist, or a reputable species-specific expert who can develop and maintain animal welfare plans

in consultation with third-party experts, Hyatt Regency Saipan has decided to relocate Sky to Hyatt Regency Guam. The aim was to provide a peaceful yet in-

teractive retirement in the company of other macaws in Guam. Macaws have a life span of up to 50 years and Hyatt Regency Guam partners with a licensed

zookeeping company which will be able to care for Sky in an advanced environment.

In early 2023, the management at Hyatt Regency Saipan thoroughly assessed all mandatory legal fulfillments to execute the complex relocation logistics.

Hyatt Regency Saipan took the initiative to coordinate the kickoff with Saipan Humane Society, led by Lauren Cabrera. In June 2023, Hyatt seized the opportunity to invite Dr. Whitney Collins, a visiting veterinarian and bird specialist from Guam. During her visit, Sky received a comprehensive health screening, certified that Sky is in perfect health.

In November, Dr. Mariana Turner of Guam Department of Agriculture provided the necessary requirements for Sky's travel. One of them included quarantine in a pre-approved facility in both destinations for several days. Additionally, an added health certificate was needed that has been conducted and signed by a licensed veteri-

narian prior to any travel.

In early 2024, the dedicated team at Hyatt Regency Saipan left no stone unturned in their restless efforts to provide Sky with a life that he truly deserves. The team, headed by general manager Simon Graf, Marketing & Communications manager Bea O'Malley, plus the support by all division heads, held weekly strategy meetings to update each other on the long list of requirements and time lines. Their unwavering commitment and dedication toward the goal guaranteed that Sky's needs were fulfilled.

A Hyatt guest room was vacated and equipped with a multitude of quarantine demands to allow subsequent interim health checks and final approvals. Finally on March 19, 2024 at 10:30am, Sky boarded Star Marianas propeller plane to Guam, where he then started his second leg of quarantine at AMC Petlodge until Sky will arrive to his final caretaker at Hyatt Regency Guam. (PR)

When will Fed cut rates? As US economy flexes its muscles, maybe later or not at all

WASHINGTON (AP)—Ever since the Federal Reserve signaled last fall that it was likely done raising interest rates, Wall Street traders, economists, car buyers, would-be homeowners—pretty much everyone—began obsessing over a single question: When will the Fed start cutting rates?

But now, with the U.S. economy showing surprising vigor, a different question has arisen: Will the central bank really cut rates three times this year, as the Fed itself has predicted—or even cut at all? The Fed typically cuts only when the economy appears to be weakening and needs help.

Lower interest rates would reduce borrowing costs for homes, cars and other major purchases and probably fuel higher stock prices, all of which could help accelerate growth. An even more robust economy might also benefit President Joe Biden's re-election campaign.

Friday's blockbuster jobs report for March reinforced the notion that the economy is managing quite nicely on its own. The government said employers added a huge burst of jobs last month—more than 300,000—and the unemployment rate dipped to a low 3.8% from 3.9%.

Some analysts responded by arguing that it's clear the last thing the economy needs now is more stimulus from lower rates.

"If the data is too strong, then why are we cutting?" asked Torsten Slok, chief economist at Apollo Global Management, a wealth management firm. "I think the Fed will not cut rates this year. Higher (rates) for longer is the answer."

In March, the central bank's policymakers—as a group—had penciled in three rate cuts for 2024, just as they had in December. Some economists still expect the Fed to carry out its first rate reduction in June or July. But even at last month's Fed meeting, some cracks had emerged: Nine of the 19 policymakers forecast just two rate cuts or fewer for 2024.

Since then, Friday's jobs data, combined with an unexpectedly buoyant report showing that factory output is expanding again after months of contracting, suggested that the economy is extending an unexpected run of healthy growth. Despite the Fed's aggressive streak of rate hikes in 2022 and 2023, which sent mortgage rates and other borrowing costs surging, the economy is defying long-standing expectations that it would weaken.

Such trends have made some Fed officials nervous. Though inflation is down sharply from its peak, it remains stubbornly above the Fed's 2% target. Rapid economic growth could reignite inflation pressures, undoing the progress that has been made.

Yellen: US-China relationship on 'more stable footing' but more can be done to improve ties

BEIJING (AP)—U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen sent a message of mutual cooperation at a meeting Sunday with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, highlighting the improvement in relations since her visit to China last year while recognizing that major differences remain.

After focusing on trade and economic issues for the first two days of her visit, Yellen turned to the broader U.S.-China relationship in the meeting with Li, one of China's top leaders.

"While we have more to do, I believe that, over the past year, we have put our bilateral relationship on more stable footing," she said in the ornate Fujian room of the Great Hall of the People on the west side of Tiananmen Square.

Yellen, who is regarded favorably in China, is the first Cabinet member to visit since Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping met in California in

November in a carefully orchestrated meeting to set the troubled relationship between their countries on a better course.

Li, in remarks before the media before their meeting, said the high media interest in Yellen's visit "shows the high expectation they have ... and also the expectation and hope to grow" the U.S.-China relationship.

China's emergence as an economic and military power has created a rivalry with the long dominant United States.

The U.S. has restricted China's access to advanced semiconductors and other technology, saying it could be used for military purposes. China, still a middle-income country, accuses the U.S. of trying to constrain its economic development.

At their meeting, Li told Yellen that China hopes the U.S. won't politicize economic and trade issues or overstretch

the definition of national security, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Yellen came to China with trade practices that put American companies and workers at an unfair competitive disadvantage at the top of her agenda.

Chinese government subsidies and other policy support have encouraged solar panel and EV makers in China to invest in factories, building far more production capacity than the domestic market can absorb.

While that has driven down prices for consumers, Western governments fear that that capacity will flood their markets with low-priced exports, threatening American and European jobs.

But Li argued that the development of the green energy industry in China would make an important contribution to combating climate change, the Xinhua report said.

The U.S. and China on Sat-

urday agreed to hold "intensive exchanges" on more balanced economic growth, according to a U.S. statement issued after Yellen and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng held extended meetings over two days in the southern city of Guangzhou.

They also agreed to start exchanges on combating money laundering. It was not immediately clear when and where the talks would take place.

"As the world's two largest economies, we have a duty to our own countries and to the world to responsibly manage our complex relationship and to cooperate and show leadership on addressing pressing global challenges," Yellen said.

Relations were at a low point when she visited in July in the early stages of efforts to improve ties.

China had cut off talks on a range of issues in anger over a visit by then U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in 2022. Tensions were further inflamed by a Chinese balloon that traversed America in early 2023 before being shot down by a U.S. fighter jet.

World

Israel is pulling some troops from southern Gaza

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel's military announced Sunday it had withdrawn its forces from the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, wrapping up a key phase in its ground offensive against the Hamas militant group and bringing its troop presence in the territory to one of the lowest levels since the six-month war began.

But defense officials said

» Now plan is to clear Hamas from Rafah

troops were merely regrouping as the army prepares to move into Hamas' last stronghold, Rafah. "The war in Gaza continues, and we are far from stopping," said the military chief, Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi.

Local broadcaster Channel 13 TV reported that Israel was preparing to begin evacuating Rafah within one week and the process could

take several months.

Still, the withdrawal was a milestone as Israel and Hamas marked six months of fighting. Military officials, speaking on condition of anonymity under army policy, said a "significant force" remained in Gaza to continue targeted operations including in Khan Younis, hometown of the Hamas leader, Yehya Sinwar.

AP video in Khan Younis showed some people return-

ing to a landscape marked by shattered multistory buildings and climbing over debris. Cars were overturned and charred. Southern Gaza's main hospital, Nasser, was in shambles.

"It's all just rubble," a dejected Ahmad Abu al-Rish said. "Animals can't live here, so how is a human supposed to?"

Israel for weeks has vowed a ground offensive in nearby Rafah. But the city shelters some 1.4 million people—more than

half of Gaza's population. The prospect of an offensive has raised global alarm, including from Israel's top ally, the U.S., which has demanded to see a credible plan to protect civilians. Allowing people to return to nearby Khan Younis could relieve some pressure on Rafah.

White House national se-

curity spokesman John Kirby repeated on Sunday the U.S. opposition to a Rafah offensive and told ABC the U.S. believes that the partial Israeli withdrawal "is really just about rest and refit for these troops that have been on the ground for four months and not necessarily, that we can tell, indicative of

Attacks on Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant significantly increase accident risk, IAEA head says

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—The head of the U.N.'s atomic watchdog agency on Sunday condemned a Ukrainian drone strike on one of six nuclear reactors at the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine, saying such attacks "significantly increase the risk of a major nuclear accident."

In a statement on the social media platform X, Rafael Mariano Grossi confirmed at least three direct hits against the ZNPP main reactor containment structures took place. "This cannot happen," he said.

He said it was the first such attack since November 2022,

when he set out five basic principles to avoid a serious nuclear accident with radiological consequences.

Officials at the plant said the site was attacked Sunday by Ukrainian military drones, including a strike on the dome of the plant's sixth power unit.

According to the plant authorities, there was no critical damage or casualties and radiation levels at the plant were normal after the strikes. Later on Sunday, however, Russian state-owned nuclear agency Rosatom said that three people were wounded in the "unprecedented series of drone attacks," specifical-

ly when a drone hit an area close to the site's canteen.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said Sunday that its experts had been informed of the drone strike and that "such detonation is consistent with IAEA observations."

In a separate statement, the IAEA confirmed physical impact of drone attacks at the plant, including at one of its six reactors. One casualty was reported, it said.

"Damage at unit 6 has not compromised nuclear safety, but this is a serious incident with potential to undermine integrity of the reactor's containment system" it added.

The power plant has been caught in the crossfire since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in 2022 and seized the facility shortly after. The IAEA has repeatedly expressed alarm about the nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, amid fears of a potential nuclear catastrophe. Both Ukraine and Russia have regularly accused the other of attacking the plant, which is still close to the front lines.

The plant's six reactors have been shut down for months, but it still needs power and qualified staff to operate crucial cooling systems and other safety features.

WORLD BRIEFS

Int'l leaders condemn Ecuador after police break into Mexican Embassy

QUITO, Ecuador (AP)—The global condemnation of Ecuador's government for its decision to break into the Mexican Embassy snowballed Sunday with more presidents and other leaders expressing disapproval, shock and dismay.

The criticism came as Mexico's ambassador and other personnel arrived in Mexico City on Sunday afternoon after departing Ecuador's capital, Quito, on a commercial flight. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador severed diplomatic ties with Ecuador immediately after Friday's raid, which international law experts, presidents and diplomats have deemed a violation of long-established international accords. Alicia Bárcena, Mexico's secretary of foreign relations, thanked the returning diplomats "for defending our embassy in Quito even at the risk of their own physical well-being." "Not even the dictator Pinochet had dared to enter the Mexican embassy in Chile," she said Sunday, referring to the late Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. "They entered violently and without authorization, physically assaulting (diplomats). We energetically condemn it." Police broke through the external doors of the embassy to arrest Jorge Glas, a former vice president who had been residing there since December. He had sought asylum after being indicted on corruption charges. Bárcena said Mexico plans to challenge the raid on Monday at the World Court in The Hague. She added that 18 countries in Latin America, 20 in Europe and the Organization of American States have backed Mexico. The Spanish foreign ministry in a statement Sunday said, "The entry by force into the Embassy of Mexico in Quito constitutes a violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. We call for respect for international law and harmony between Mexico and Ecuador, brotherly countries to Spain and members of the Ibero-American community."

US treads carefully in responding to Hong Kong's new national security law

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. has denounced Hong Kong's new national security law as a tool to potentially silence dissent both at home and abroad, but so far the action from Washington has been notably muted, disappointing those fighting for the Chinese territory's democracy and freedoms. Since the law's swift passage on March 19, the U.S. has announced visa restrictions on an unspecified number of unnamed Hong Kong officials but taken no further action. That's a far cry from 2020, when Beijing imposed national security restrictions to end months of unrest on Hong Kong streets. The U.S. responded by hitting the city's highest-ranking officials with sanctions and depriving the territory of its preferential trading status. While the new law, known as Article 23, now expands the Hong Kong government's powers to go after those it accuses of spying and to target dissidents anywhere in the world, Washington has been treading carefully. The State Department declined to preview or comment on any potential actions but said it is considering all options. Analysts suggest the Biden administration may not want to rock relations with China in an election year, especially when the impact of the law might take a while to manifest itself and any punitive U.S. measures would be unlikely to bring about meaningful change. "U.S. policymakers appear resigned to the fact that China's takeover of Hong Kong is, for all intents and purposes, complete and irreversible," said Craig Singleton, senior China fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a research institute based in Washington. "Moreover, it's not entirely clear that any specific actions from Washington would prompt Beijing to meaningfully reassess its approach towards Hong Kong, with Chinese policymakers having more or less signaled that Hong Kong's fate is not up for debate."

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Life & Style

Jelly Roll dominates 2024 CMT Music Awards with host Kelsea Ballerini

By MARIA SHERMAN
AP Music Writer

Jelly Roll won big at the 2024 CMT Music Awards Sunday night, taking home three awards at the annual event celebrating the best in country music videos.

His accolades began with the CMT performance of the year award for his gospel-assisted rendition of “Need a Fa-

vor” at the 2023 CMT Music Awards nearly a year ago to the day. It also was his first-ever awards show performance.

“In that last year you changed my life in every way I never thought my life could be changed,” the tattooed rapper-turned-country breakout star said in an emotional acceptance speech live from the Moody Center in Austin, Tex-

as. The show was broadcast live on CBS and Paramount+. The music video for “Need A Favor” earned him male video of the year and the biggest award of the night, video of the year.

“I’m having one of the best nights of my life,” he said, before focusing his speech on people who are looking for “second chances,” specifical-



AP
Jelly Roll performs during the iHeartRadio Music Awards, Monday, April 1, 2024, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

took home three awards, winning over audiences for his larger-than-life personality and outsider songs.

Kelsea Ballerini hosted the awards for fourth time in a row, opening with a comedic sketch about reading the minds of country music’s biggest names that ended with Keith Urban hugging the beaver mascot of beloved Texas gas station chain Buc-ee’s.

‘Godzilla x Kong’ maintains box-office dominion in second weekend

NEWYORK (AP)—“Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire” easily swatted away a pair of challengers to hold on to the top spot at the box office for the second week in a row, according to studio estimates Sunday.

After its above-expectations \$80 million launch last weekend, the MonsterVerse mash-up brought in \$31.7 million over its second weekend, a 60% drop from its debut. The Warner Bros. and Legendary Pictures release, directed by Adam Wingard, has thus far outperformed any of the studio’s recent monster films except for 2014’s “Godzilla.”

But with \$361.1 million worldwide in two weeks, “Godzilla x Kong” could ultimately leapfrog the \$529 million global haul of 2014’s “Godzilla.” The latest installment, in which Godzilla and Kong team up, cost about \$135 million to produce.

“Godzilla x Kong” extended its box-office reign as another primate-themed movie arrived in theaters. Dev Patel’s “Monkey Man,” an India-set revenge thriller



AP
This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Godzilla, left, and Kong in a scene from “Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire.”

released by Universal Pictures, opened in 3,029 North American theaters with an estimated \$10.1 million.

That marked a strong debut for Patel’s modestly budgeted directorial debut in which he stars in a bloody, politically charged action extravaganza. “Monkey Man,” which cost about \$10 million to make, was dropped by its original studio, Netflix, after which Jordan Peele and his Monkeypaw Productions swooped in.

The weekend’s other new wide release, “The First Omen,” from Disney’s 20th Century Studios, struggled to

make a big impact with moviegoers. It came in fourth with an estimated \$8.4 million in ticket sales in 3,375 theaters, while collecting an additional \$9.1 million overseas. The R-rated horror film, which cost about \$30 million to make, is a prequel to the 1976 Richard Donner-directed original starring Gregory Peck and Lee Remick.

This version, directed by Arkasha Stevenson and starring Nell Tiger Free, Tawfeek Barhom and Bill Nighy, follows 2006’s “The Omen,” which opened to \$16 million and ultimately grossed \$119 million.

ly those in juvenile detention facilities. “I once heard a man say that ‘you don’t change until the pain to remain the same is greater than the pain it takes

to change,’ and that’s what it takes. I love you, Texas.”

In some ways, it was déjà vu from the 2023 awards show, where Jelly Roll also

Conan O’Brien will guest on ‘The Tonight Show,’ 14 years after his acrimonious exit

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

Does time—and a new host—heal all wounds? Fourteen years after Conan O’Brien was messily ousted from NBC’s “The Tonight Show” to make way for the return of Jay Leno the comedian is finally back.

O’Brien will appear on the April 9 show to promote his new travel series “Conan O’Brien Must Go” for Max in conversation with Jimmy Fallon, who took over from Leno in 2014.

After more than 15 years of hosting “Late Night with Conan O’Brien” on NBC, O’Brien was promoted to lead the network’s flagship late-night show in 2009, after it was announced Leno would be given a new prime-time

show, also on NBC.

After seven months of slipping “Tonight Show” ratings and pressure from affiliates who said “The Jay Leno Show” wasn’t a strong enough lead-in to their nightly newscasts, NBC made a plan to shorten Leno’s show to a half-hour and give it a 11:35 p.m. timeslot, which would have bumped “The Tonight Show” to 12:05 a.m.

“It was my mistaken belief that, like my predecessor, I would have the benefit of some time and, just as important, some degree of ratings support from the prime-time schedule,” O’Brien said at the time in a statement.

He refused to accept the move, and the public spat ended with O’Brien and his staff receiving a multimil-

lion-dollar payout to exit NBC in early 2010.

“And I just want to say to the kids out there watching: You can do anything you want in life. Unless Jay Leno wants to do it, too,” O’Brien said in a monologue before his departure, calling “The Tonight Show” the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.

O’Brien didn’t stay off the airwaves for too long, returning to late-night in November 2010 on basic-cable network TBS. “Conan” would run for nearly 11 years. (The first episode beat Leno’s “Tonight Show” in the ratings.)

In 2012, O’Brien told The Hollywood Reporter that while he still had latent resentment, he acknowledged a onetime “amazing partnership with NBC.”

Workplace tension builds after dustup with manager

DEAR ABBY: I’m a soft-spoken person. I work in a medical laboratory, and I am finally speaking up for what I believe in (after years of social anxiety and depression). At the last meeting, when asked by the manager for suggestions to improve the lab workflow, I spoke up.

Fast-forward to tonight. When I expressed some excitement about my idea, the site leader, a different manager, shot my idea down, saying, “It’s not going to make a difference.” This isn’t the first time she has made me feel like my ideas are dumb or that I’m not intelligent, and I snapped. I asked her what ideas SHE had, and she looked as if I offended her, but she’s done this numerous times since she came here. Meanwhile, she has her favorite person in the lab who gets away with murder.

Was I wrong for getting upset at her? I just feel like my suggestions go unnoticed or are scoffed at, but when another person comes up with something similar, she applauds them.

HAD ENOUGH IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR HAD ENOUGH: Blowing up at the manager may have felt good at the moment after years of silence caused by depression and social anxiety, but it was the wrong thing to do. That kind of behavior does not belong in a professional environment. Favoritism happens in many work environments, and it can be frustrating. If

you can’t find a way to accept it, you might be happier working at a different lab.

DEAR ABBY: My stepdaughter has two children. She married a man who has one child, “Hayley.” They have been married four years, and Hayley turned 18 last year. We have seen her only five or six times, and she seems uninterested in getting to know us.

The first Christmas, I went out of my way to give her gifts I thought she would enjoy as a teenager. The next Christmas, she didn’t spend any time with the family, so I sent a gift home with her dad, but never heard a word from her.

Last year, Hayley graduated from high school and started working. Because we weren’t going to see them at Christmas, I sent the other grandchildren gifts but did not include Hayley. My stepdaughter got upset because we left Hayley out. We explained that 1. She never acknowledges the gifts we send; 2. She is now an adult; and 3. We never see her. Are we wrong not to include her?

PERPLEXED ABOUT STEPFAMILY ETIQUETTE

DEAR PERPLEXED: The answer to your question is yes and no. Hayley doesn’t appear to be a “child” who is easy to love. She has certainly given you no reason to. However, in the interest of family harmony, it was wrong to ex-

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

clude her entirely. Not knowing the young woman, it would be hard to know what she might have liked to receive. Next year, send her a coffee shop gift card with a sweet note so she won’t feel she is being ignored as she has ignored you.

TO MY MUSLIM READERS: At sundown, it is time for the breaking of the Ramadan fast. Happy Eid al-Fitr, everyone. —LOVE, ABBY

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in “What Every Teen Should Know.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

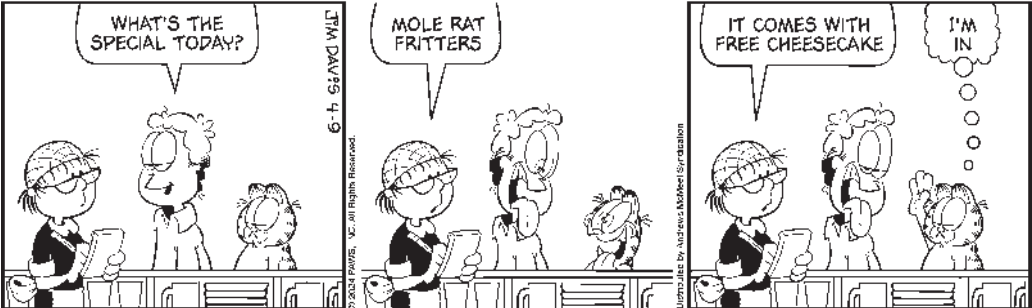
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



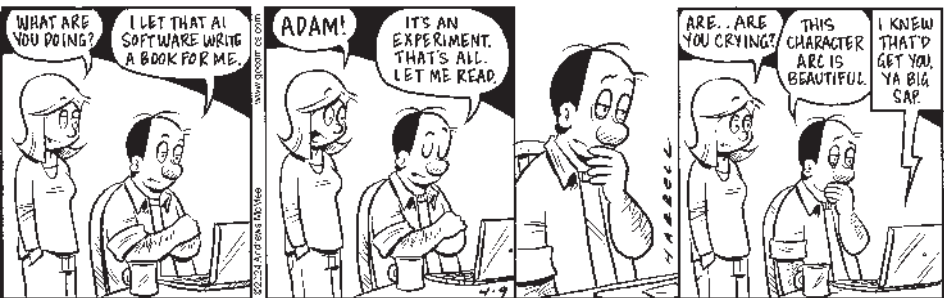
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



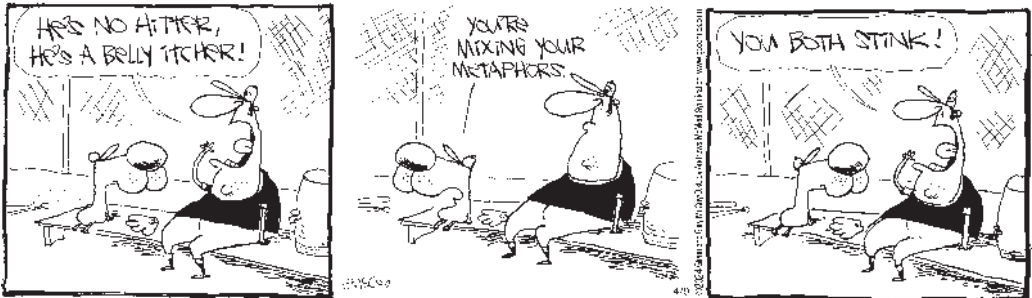
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Puglist's weapon
5 Carte lead-in
8 Humdrum
12 Con
13 Sailor
14 Ore deposit
15 Loyal
17 Taxi alter-native
18 Still, in verse
19 Flushed
20 Drudges
21 Cave mammal
22 Rock's Ocasek
23 Meadow
26 May honorees
30 Beige
31 Wee dollop
32 Grooving on
33 Ballet legend Rudolf
35 Velocity
36 Talk on and on
37 Two, in Acapulco
38 Desolate
41 "Levi-tating" singer Lipa

DOWN

42 Texter's "Wow!"
45 Pro-longed sleep
46 Chess-playing
48 You love (Lat.)
49 Record book suffix
50 Valhalla VIP
51 "Alice" diner
52 Fleur-de-
53 Im-pudent
1 Kismet
2 Con-cerning
3 Dazzle
4 Dead heat
5 Shoe-lace tip
6 Noisy
7 Rush-more
8 High-prez
9 Timber wolf
10 Mid-east gulf
11 Towel word
16 Thin nail
20 Deep hole
21 Earl Scruggs' music
22 Steal from
23 Swamp
24 Hosp. section
25 Blunder
26 Dallas hoopster, briefly
27 Away from WSW
28 Hwy. Turf
31 Society new-comer
34 Tibetan bovine
35 Shower bar?
37 Songs for two
38 Swindle
39 Hefty book
40 Lawyer Clooney
41 Sitcom pioneer Arnaz
42 Shoppe description
43 Natu-ralist John
44 Bloke
46 Costa — Sol
47 Jazzy style

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-9

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kristen Stewart, 34; Leighton Meester, 38; Tanner Novlan, 38; Jay Baruchel, 42.

Happy Birthday: Leave no room for error. Be direct, ask questions and figure out your best way forward before you make a move. Time is on your side, so don't feel pressured. Hard work, decisive action and putting your energy where it will do some good will lift your spirits and increase your profile. Monitor relationships with friends, relatives and business associates to avoid being led astray or taking on too much. Your numbers are 3, 12, 18, 25, 33, 37, 41.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Learn how to manage money better. Don't buy into a gimmick that promises the impossible. Look for a way to raise your income, secure your position and boost your confidence. Don't get angry; get moving in a positive direction. Be the master of your domain. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Embrace change and explore new possibilities. An opportunity to use your skills differently will offer insight into pursuits that encourage marketability, clout and exciting prospects. Consider expanding your skills to meet the demands, and you will find your niche. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Backing the wrong person will put you in a vulnerable position. Refrain from giving anyone control or the right to influence what you do next. Think for yourself and stand up for what's right. Question motives and make decisions based on facts, not emotions. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Get moving. Research, try something new and expand your mind. Listen, but don't

buy into someone else's dream when you have goals to pursue. A change regarding a partnership will turn out better than anticipated. Do things your way. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Do things that please you. Surround yourself with people who enlighten you, but don't buy into or pay for someone pressuring you for a financial contribution. Too much of anything will drag you down. Concentrate on personal improvement. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Say little, but do a lot. Bring about positive change and participate in events and activities that stretch your imagination. What you learn will encourage new beginnings with people striving for stability and a passage forward. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Choose your battles wisely. Enter the ring only if your facts are straight and your intentions are honorable. Don't expect to keep the peace or please everyone; with debate comes change. Prepare for the consequences and move forward swiftly. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Pick up the pace and make things happen. A change will offer a unique perspective regarding possibilities. Surround yourself with hardworking individuals who share your values. Take a leadership position and march toward your goal. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Con-fiding in others will result in disappointment. Refuse to let your ego lead the way. Your intent to be and do your best will far exceed trying to prove yourself to others. Let your actions and the results you get be your calling card. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Choose positive changes that make life easier and your home comfortable. Don't share secrets, gossip or get involved in events or activities that might jeopardize your reputation, emotional well-being or health. ★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Pay attention to detail, and keep tabs on what everyone around you is doing. Don't take on too much or put yourself in a negative position due to someone else's stubbornness. Make decisions that offer a positive outcome, and you'll avoid making mistakes. ★★★★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Pay attention to investments and debt. Keeping your finances in order will relieve stress and give you more options when an opportunity presents itself. Connect with people who have always been in your corner. ★★



Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, responsive and goal-oriented. You are prompt and focused.

★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

			5	8	6	2	4			
2					7	3	8		5	
						4	2	9	3	
1			4	3			5		7	
	2		7				6		4	
4				2				3	8	
6		9	3	5					2	
			1				3			
	4					7	5	6		

Difficulty: ★★

4/9

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

3	5	9	1	4	2	8	7	6
4	7	1	5	8	6	3	2	9
6	2	8	9	3	7	4	1	5
5	9	4	7	1	8	2	6	3
8	6	2	3	5	4	7	9	1
7	1	3	6	2	9	5	8	4
2	8	5	4	9	1	6	3	7
9	3	7	2	6	5	1	4	8
1	4	6	8	7	3	9	5	2

Difficulty: ★

4/8

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Solution: 9 letters

I Y G N I R E E N I G N E S L
E N G S E C R U O S E R E A A
T V V O N T O B T A H C D T N
R S I E L I A M E L I V A N G
A O I T S O U D K O A D O E U
N C N O I T N E V N I I N G A
S I A O N N M H C E T T C A G
L A M A I A G E C I R R O A E
A L U V R T M O N E E T A Y F
T Q H K I E A G C T T U I O S
I W E M N R O M U O D F D S P
O T I T I C T P O I D E E E E
N N S S E L M U T T E M M E
G D K R N O I T A C U D E A C
M U S I C N R A E L G A E G H

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Advancements, Advertise, Agent, Audit, Automation, Chatbot, Code, Cognitive, Computer, Data, Education, Email, Engineering, Facial, Feed, Games, Human, Invention, Investment, Language, Learn, Market, Media, Music, Quantum, Recognition, Resources, Risk, Science, Social, Speech, Technology, Timing, Toys, Translation, Virtual, Voices
Yesterday's Answer: Alligns
To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 62 through 77, order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Rockets eliminated from playoffs as Mavericks win in OT



DALLAS (AP)—Kyrie Irving scored a season-high 48 points, Dante Exum forced overtime with a buzzer-beating 3-pointer and the Dallas Mavericks rallied from 22 points down for a 147-136 victory over the Houston Rockets on Sunday.

Luka Doncic had 37 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds as the Mavericks took another step toward the fifth seed in the Western Conference playoffs.

Dillon Brooks scored a season-high 29 points, and Fred VanVleet had 24 points and 12 assists for the Rockets, who were eliminated from postseason contention after not trailing until the final three minutes of regulation.

It was a fifth consecutive loss for Houston following an 11-game winning streak that is tied for the longest in the NBA this season.

With Houston leading by three with 8.3 seconds to go in regulation, Jabari Smith Jr. missed two free throws. Dallas was out of timeouts, and Exum scrambled up the court and passed to Doncic. The Dallas superstar dribbled toward mid-court and faked a shot before passing to Exum, whose 3 over Smith beat the buzzer.

Irving, who scored 25 points in fourth quarter and overtime, put Dallas ahead for good in the extra period at 133-131 with two free throws.

CLIPPERS 120, CAVALIERS 118

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Paul George scored 23 of his 39 points in the fourth quarter, James Harden added 22 and Los Angeles rallied to beat Cleveland for their 50th victory.

Los Angeles overcame a 26-point deficit for the third-largest comeback victory in franchise history.

Terance Mann hit a tying 3-pointer and Amir Coffey followed with a 3 to give the Clippers their first lead since late in the first quarter, 118-115.

Jarrett Allen completed a three-point play to tie it at 118. After a timeout, George hit a jumper for a 120-118 lead with seven seconds left.

Darius Garland drove the lane and got blocked by Paul, but the Cavs got the offensive rebound. Max Strus put up a desperation shot from the right corner, falling down by the Clippers bench as it missed with time expired.

The Clippers reached the 50-win mark for the first time since 2016-17 when they had 51.

CELTICS 124, TRAIL BLAZERS 107

BOSTON (AP)—Jaylen Brown scored 26 points and reached 10,000 in his NBA career, leading Boston past Portland for their 13th straight home victory.

Kristaps Porzingis had his third straight double-double



This handout photo provided by the Dallas Mavericks shows Dallas Mavericks guard Kyrie Irving (11) shooting against Houston Rockets defenders Jalen Green (4) and Cam Whitmore (7) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, April 7, 2024 in Dallas.

with 12 points and 10 boards in just 27 minutes for NBA-leading Boston.

Payton Pritchard scored 20 points, Derrick White had 15 and Jrue Holiday 12 for the Celtics, who have won 14 of their last 16 overall.

Dalano Banton led Portland with 28 points and Deandre Ayton had 22 points and 14 rebounds. Jabari Walker added 14 points and 18 rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who finished 2-5 on their seven-game road trip.

Celtics star Jayson Tatum sat out because of a right knee contusion. It was the sixth game missed for the team's leading scorer (27.0 points per game).

PACERS 117, HEAT 115

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Myles Turner finished with 22 points and 13 rebounds, T.J. McConnell added 22 points and Indiana hung on to strengthen their playoff prospects with a victory over Miami.

The Pacers have won four of five to take a 1 1/2-game lead over the Heat for the Eastern Conference's sixth and final guaranteed playoff spot.

Jimmy Butler had 27 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for the Heat. Tyler Herro scored 21 points but had a made free throw erased because of a lane violation on Kevin Love with 3.6 seconds to go and the Heat down two.

Bam Adebayo and Caleb Martin each scored 20 and Adebayo had 12 rebounds for Miami, which lost for just the second time in six games as it tries to avoid staying in the league's Play-In tournament.

Indiana never trailed over the final 45 1/2 minutes, but Miami certainly made it difficult late. The Heat cut the deficit to one twice in the final 3 1/2 minutes, but the Pacers answered both times on a festive day for Pacers fans.

THUNDER 121, HORNETS 118

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Josh Giddey had 20 points, 13 assists and 13 rebounds for his 11th career triple-double, Isaiah Joe had two key 3-pointers in the final 1:30 and Oklahoma City beat Charlotte to snap a three-game losing streak.

The Thunder had lost their previous three games—their longest skid of the season—with stars Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Jalen Williams out with injuries.

But Aaron Wiggins stepped up with 26 points and Chet Holmgren had 20 points and 10 rebounds as the Thunder escaped with a win when the cold-shooting Brandon Miller missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer that would have sent it to overtime.

Grant Williams led the Hornets with 19 points, and Vasa Micic had 17 points and 10 assists.

Oklahoma City entered the game third in the Western Conference, 1 1/2 games behind first-place Denver.

MAGIC 113, BULLS 98

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Paolo Banchero scored 24 points, Jalen Suggs added 19 and Orlando kept up a playoff push that could land them as high as second in the Eastern Conference with a win over Chicago.

The Magic (46-32) moved into at least a tie for third place in the East by completing a four-game sweep of the Bulls.

DeMar DeRozan had 30 points for the Bulls and Javonte Green, starting for the first time this season in place of injured forward Alex Caruso, added 15 points and eight rebounds.

The Bulls, locked into the bottom half of the Eastern Conference play-in bracket with four games left to play, shot 50.7% from the field but had 21 turnovers.

Green, coming off a career-high 25 points in a win over New York on Friday night after spending most of the sea-

son in the G League, shot 6 for 7 in 22 minutes.

PELICANS 113, SUNS 105

PHOENIX (AP)—C.J. McCollum scored 31 points, Zion Williamson had 29 and New Orleans beat Phoenix, leaving the teams tied for the sixth and final guaranteed Western Conference playoff spot.

Both teams are 46-32 with four games remaining, two games behind fifth-place Dallas. The Suns own the tiebreaker, having won the season series 2-1.

Williamson, who sat out Friday night in a loss at San Antonio because of a finger injury, also had 10 rebounds and seven assists as the Pelicans snapped a four-game losing streak and moved to 25-14 on the road. Their next three games are also away from home before finishing at home next Sunday against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Devin Booker scored 25 points for Phoenix, but was 0 for 6 from 3-point range. In his previous three games against the Pelicans, he scored 50 or more points, including a 52-point game Monday night in New Orleans.

KNICKS 122, BUCKS 109

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Jalen Brunson scored 43 points and New York surged in the second half to win and Milwaukee their fourth consecutive loss.

The Bucks are facing their longest losing streak of the season and also have dropped six of their last seven. Milwaukee is a game ahead of the Knicks and Orlando Magic in the race for the Eastern Conference's No. 2 playoff seed behind the Boston Celtics.

At least this loss came to a team with a winning record. The Bucks' current slide started with losses to the Washington Wizards, Memphis Grizzlies and Toronto Raptors, who are

points and Golden State ran away from Utah early on the way to a win.

The Warriors clinched at least a spot in the four-team play-in tournament before the game when Houston lost 147-136 in overtime to Dallas.

From the opening tip, Thompson came out looking for his shot to handle the bulk of the scoring load on a night Stephen Curry was held out for rest and Chris Paul started in his place.

Coach Steve Kerr utilized his 26th starting lineup combination of the season. The break gave Curry several days between games. He has played in 71 already, his most since 2016-17.

TIMBERWOLVES 127, LAKERS 117

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Naz Reid hit six 3-pointers while scoring 31 points, and Minnesota capitalized on LeBron James' absence and Anthony Davis' early exit with an eye injury for a victory over Los Angeles.

Anthony Edwards added 26 points for the Timberwolves, who moved even with Denver atop the Western Conference at 54-24 with their seventh win in nine games. Minnesota didn't waste its golden opportunity to beat the surging Lakers, who played most of the night without their two superstars.

James stayed home with flu-like symptoms, missing his 11th game of his 21st NBA season. Davis then went to the locker room after getting hit in the face by Kyle Anderson while scoring a tip-in basket late in the first quarter.

The nine-time All-Star didn't return to the game. Davis' left eye already was injured from a hit taken last month in a game against Golden State.

RAPTORS 130, WIZARDS 122

TORONTO (AP)—Immanuel Quickley had a season-high 31 points and 13 assists, RJ Barrett scored 22 points, and Toronto beat Washington, handling the slumping Wizards their franchise-worst 64th loss of the season.

Kelly Olynyk scored 21 points and Gary Trent Jr. had 20 as the Raptors snapped an eight-game home losing streak and got consecutive wins for the first time since a three-game streak Feb. 22-26.

Quickley went 10 for 10 at the free-throw line for the Raptors, who stopped a 15-game losing streak on Thursday by winning 117-111 at Milwaukee.

Deni Avdija had 32 points and 10 rebounds, and Jordan Poole added 20 points and 12 assists for Washington. Corey Kispert scored 21 points and Patrick Baldwin had a season-best 16 points and a career-high 11 rebounds, but the Wizards lost for the sixth time in seven.

all well below .500.

KINGS 107, NETS 77

NEW YORK (AP)—Domantas Sabonis had 18 points and 20 rebounds to extend his streak of double-doubles to 61 games, and Sacramento routed Brooklyn.

De'Aaron Fox scored 20 points for the Kings, who improved to 45-33 and stopped a two-game slide that had dropped them into ninth in the Western Conference.

Sabonis owns the seventh-longest streak of double-doubles in NBA history, having moved past Elvin Hayes' stretch of 60 straight from Oct. 30, 1968, to Feb. 22, 1969.

Keegan Murray added 19 points for the Kings, while Trey Lyles had 14 and Davion Mitchell chipped in 12 off the bench.

76ERS 133, SPURS 126, 20T

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Tyrese Maxey had a career-high 52 points and injury-depleted Philadelphia overcame Victor Wembanyama and San Antonio in double overtime for their fifth straight victory.

Wembanyama had 33 points, 18 rebounds and seven blocks.

Philadelphia star Joel Embiid sat out the second night of a back-to-back. He had played three straight after missing 29 games because of a torn meniscus in his left knee.

Maxey reached 50 or more for the third time this season, joining Embiid, Allen Iverson and Wilt Chamberlain as the only players in franchise history to accomplish the feat.

Maxey had 50 points against Indiana on Nov. 12, and 51 at Utah on Feb. 1. On Sunday, he was 19 for 41 from the field, 2 of 10 on 3-pointers and made 10 free throws without a mess.

WARRIORS 118, JAZZ 110

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Klay Thompson scored 32

Pirates continue hot start beat Orioles, 3-2



PITTSBURGH
(AP)—Balti-

more Orioles shortstop Gunnar Henderson made a diving stop near second base on Edward Olivares' grounder in a try for a game-ending double play, then threw wildly past first for an error as two runs scored and gave the Pittsburgh Pirates a 3-2 victory on Sunday.

With the wild win, the Pirates improved to 8-2 for the first time since 2018.

Baltimore led 2-1 when the Pirates loaded the bases on Yennier Cano (1-1) on singles by Ke'Bryan Hayes and Jack Suwinski followed by Connor Joe's walk.

Rowdy Tellez hit a soft grounder to first baseman Ryan Mountcastle, and umpire Dan Iassogna ruled Hayes beat his throw home only for the call to be changed to a forceout in a video review.

ATHLETICS 7, TIGERS 1

DETROIT (AP)—Zack Gelof had four hits, including a three-run homer, and drove in four runs to help Oakland beat Detroit.

Gelof hit an RBI triple in the first and scored on JJ Bleday's single. He connected for his first homer of the season in the second against Jack Flaherty. He also had two singles.

Abraham Toro had two hits, scored twice and drove in a run for Oakland, which collected two wins in the three-game series.

Oakland starter Joe Boyle (1-1) struck out six while pitching five scoreless innings of two-hit ball. Boyle has recorded two of his three career victories against the Tigers.

Riley Greene hit his third homer for Detroit in the eighth inning. Flaherty (0-1) was charged with six runs and nine hits in six innings.

METS 3, REDS 1

CINCINNATI (AP)—Francisco Lindor hit a home run and ended an 0-for-24 skid as New York beat Cincinnati.

Sean Manaea (1-0) had another strong outing for the Mets. He lowered his earned-run average to 0.82 after allowing one run and three hits in five innings. He walked two and struck out six.

Lindor was 1 for 31 this season coming into the game. It was the third-longest hitless streak of his career.

Lindor doubled in the first inning, advanced to third on an infield hit and scored on a fielding error.

A pair of bunt singles loaded the bases in the second and Brandon Nimmo was hit by a pitch to force home the second run.

ROYALS 5, WHITE SOX 3



Pittsburgh Pirates' Edward Olivares (38) celebrates after hitting a walk-off fielder's choice off Baltimore Orioles relief pitcher Yennier Cano, driving in two runs during the ninth inning of a baseball game in Pittsburgh, Sunday, April 7, 2024.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP)—MJ Melendez hit his third home run of the series, a two-run drive in a three-run seventh inning as Kansas City rallied to beat Chicago for a four-game sweep.

Chicago ended a 19-inning scoreless streak in the fourth and led 3-0 in the fifth before Hunter Renroe's two-run homer off starter Garrett Crochet.

Melendez hit a two-run homer in the sixth off Deivi García (0-2) for a 4-3 lead, his third go-ahead hit of the series. Melendez flipped hit bat in triumph.

BRAVES 5, DIAMONDBACKS 2

ATLANTA (AP)—Michael Harris II hit a go-ahead homer in the fourth inning, left-hander Chris Sale gave Atlanta's rotation a boost in his first home start, and the Braves beat Arizona to cap a three-game sweep of the Diamondbacks.

The Braves hit three homers. Matt Olson led off the second with a solo shot and Austin Riley added a two-run blast in the eighth.

Sale (1-0), acquired from the Boston Red Sox in an offseason trade for Vaughn Grissom, allowed two runs on four hits with no walks in 5 1/3 innings. Atlanta relied on its bats and bullpen in comeback wins in the first two games of the series following poor starts by Spencer Strider and Max Fried.

NATIONALS 3, PHILLIES 2

WASHINGTON (AP)—MacKenzie Gore pitched five-hit ball into the sixth inning, and Washington beat Philadelphia to avoid a series sweep.

Lane Thomas stole three bases and scored the go-ahead run as Washington stopped a three-game slide. Thomas, Joey Meneses and Ildemaro Vargas each had two hits.

Gore (1-0) allowed two runs in 5 2/3 innings to defeat Philadelphia for the first

time in six career outings against the Phillies.

YANKEES 8, BLUE JAYS 3

NEW YORK (AP)—Giancarlo Stanton hit a loud tiebreaking grand slam in the third inning, and New York beat Toronto for their eighth win in 10 games to start the season.

Stanton gave the Yankees a 5-1 lead by with a 417-foot drive off Bowden Francis (0-2) that clanked against the facing of an advertisement below the second deck in left field. Stanton fell behind 0-2 in the count before turning on a 2-2 inside fastball and driving the ball 110.6 mph for his 11th career slam, his first since September 2022. He took a couple steps as he watched the ball, then flipped his bat.

Stanton also homered Saturday in a three-hit game that followed a 3-for-24 start.

BREWERS 12, MARINERS 4

MILWAUKEE (AP)—William Contreras hit two home runs, Willy Adames also homered and Milwaukee pounded Seattle.

Contreras finished with four hits and five RBIs. He hit his first homer off Seattle starter Emerson Hancock (1-1) in the second inning and connected on his second two-run shot off third baseman Josh Rojas, who pitched the eighth.

The Brewers had 14 hits. Colin Rea (2-0) went six innings and allowed seven hits, including RBI singles by Jorge Polanco and Rojas.

Adames' home run off the left-field foul pole highlighted a four-run fourth inning and chased Hancock, a 24-year-old right hander making his fifth-career major league start.

MARLINS 10, CARDINALS 3

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Miami ended their team-record nine-

game losing streak starting the season when Jazz Chisholm Jr. and Nick Gordon hit three-run homers in a six-run first inning that lifted them over St. Louis.

Miami had been the first team to start 0-9 since Atlanta and Minnesota in 2016. The Marlins avoided becoming the first team to lose its first 10 games since the 2002 Chicago White Sox began 0-11.

Max Meyer (1-0), a 25-year-old right-hander, got his first major league win in his fourth start and appearance. Meyer allowed one run and three hits in six innings, striking out three and walking one.

He had Tommy John surgery on Aug. 9, 2022, and returned to a major league mound this April 1, when he pitched five innings without a decision against the Los Angeles Angels.

RAYS 3, ROCKIES 2

DENVER (AP)—Ryan Pepiot struck out a career-high 11 batters in six shutout innings, and Tampa Bay held on to beat Colorado.

Pepiot (1-1), who came to the Rays in an offseason trade with the Los Angeles Dodgers that sent Tyler Glasnow and Manuel Margot to L.A., topped his previous high of nine strikeouts which came at Coors Field on Sept. 26 of last season when he threw six innings in relief.

He struggled in his Rays debut, allowing six runs to Texas in 5 2/3 innings on Monday. However, he was sharp against the Rockies.

GIANTS 3, PADRES 2

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Matt Chapman drove in two runs, including a go-ahead single in the eighth inning that led San Francisco over San Diego for their first series win this season.

San Diego led 2-0 before Chapman's RBI groundout in the sixth on a potential inning-inning, double-play grounder

to Jake Cronenworth. The first baseman stepped on the base, then threw to second only for the ball to bounce off the glove of shortstop Ha-Seong Kim, who had cut in front of the bag. That ended the Giants' 14-inning scoreless streak.

Wilmer Flores singled with one out in the eighth off Jhony Brito, Jorge Soler singled and Michael Conforto hit a run-scoring grounder. Confoto followed with an opposite-field single to right that scored Soler standing up.

Brito (0-2) allowed a pair of unearned runs in his second decision since San Diego acquired him from the New York Yankees in the Juan Soto trade.

Camilo Doval allowed a two-out single to Jackson Merrill, then struck out Luis Campuasano for his first save after tying for the NL lead with 39 last year.

RED SOX 12, ANGELS 2

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Reese McGuire drove in five runs, Tyler O'Neill hit his third home run of the series and Boston finished off an opening 10-game trip with a victory over Los Angeles.

Tanner Houck (2-0) allowed four hits in six shutout innings and struck out seven. The right-hander became the first Boston pitcher to go at least six innings and record seven or more strikeouts in each of his first two outings of a season.

David Hamilton and Rafael Devers also homered for Boston, which went 7-3 on the trip and opens at home on Tuesday against Baltimore.

Angels slugger Mike Trout averted a shutout in the eighth inning with his fourth homer of the season, a solo shot.

McGuire had a three-run homer in the sixth that extended Boston's lead to 7-0. He also drove in runs with a grounder in the eighth and base hit in the ninth.

CUBS 8, DODGERS 1

CHICAGO (AP)—Cody Bellinger homered against his former team, Shota Imanaga threw four shutout innings in a rain-shortened start, and Chicago beat Los Angeles.

Imanaga was lifted after the game resumed following a weather delay of nearly three hours. The left-hander allowed two singles, struck out three and walked none, giving him 10 scoreless innings over his first two big league starts.

The Cubs won for the sixth time in seven games. They took two of three in a weekend set that showcased four of the majors' top Japanese players.

Shohei Ohtani doubled in Mookie Betts in the eighth to account for the Dodgers' only run. Ohtani also hit a two-out triple in the sixth, but Freddie Freeman bounced to third for the final out of the inning.

Yency Almonte (1-0) struck out two in a scoreless inning for the victory against his former team. Daniel Palencia worked three innings for his first career save.

ASTROS 3, RANGERS 1

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Right-hander Ronel Blanco followed his no-hitter with one-hit ball over six scoreless innings, and Houston beat Texas.

Six nights after throwing a no-hitter at home against Toronto in his first start of the season, Blanco held the World Series champs without a hit until Adolis García grounded a clean single up the middle with two outs in the sixth. Blanco (2-0) then retired Evan Carter on an inning-ending fly ball and was done after 90 pitches.

Yordan Alvarez hit a three-run homer for the Astros, his shot in the third coming right after Dane Dunning (1-1) had issued consecutive walks. It was the third homer of the season for Alvarez.

Rafael Montero was already warming up in the bullpen while Blanco was pitching in the sixth. Montero then pitched the seventh, and Ryan Pressly got three outs. Josh Hader handled the ninth on his 30th birthday for his first save since joining the Astros in free agency on a \$95 million, five-year contract.

García drew a one-out walk from Hader, advanced on a wild pitch, and stopped Houston's bid for its third shutout this season when he scored on Justin Foscue's pinch-hit single for his first big league hit.

TWINS VS. GUARDIANS, PPD.

Minnesota announced the game against Cleveland has been postponed due to inclement weather and will be made up as part of a split double-header on Friday, August 9 at 1:10 p.m.

By **NHORLEEN BITCO-LILLES**
 nhorleen_lilles@saipantribune.com
 SPECIAL TO SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Kyokushinkai Karate Watanabe Dojo promotes 13



Thirteen martial arts students advanced to the next level after passing rigorous tests and training at the CNMI Martial Arts Academy of Self-Defense-Kyokushinkai Karate Watanabe Dojo.

Black belt sensei Danny Banez, assisted by brown belts Eric Atalig and Iver James Lilles, promoted 12 blue belts to yellow belt, namely Sheryne Rui Guimeroy Yang, 16; Michaela Rui Guimeroy Yang, 13; Josef Michael Yue Yang, 7; William Guo, 12; Wilson Guo, 10; Willie Guo, 9; Daniel Guo, Dennis Guo, 10; Colin Lilles, 8; John Riley Austin,



NHORLEEN BITCO-LILLES

Sensei Danny Banez presents a certificate to the newly promoted yellow belt Colin Lilles at the CNMI Martial Arts Academy of Self-Defense.



NHORLEEN BITCO-LILLES

Young martial arts students perform their kata moves during karate belt testing at the CNMI Martial Arts Academy of Self-Defense.

15; Spencer K. Floyd; 47, and Jerry Diaz, 31. Daniel A. Chlarson, 29, also moved up from yellow belt to green belt.

The martial arts students are excited about their promotion,



NHORLEEN BITCO-LILLES

Jerry Diaz receives his certificate from sensei Danny Banez after being promoted to yellow belt at the CNMI Martial Arts Academy of Self-Defense.

one of them is last year's champion Diaz who won gold in the World Karate Organization Shinkyokushinkai Full Contact Karate Championship 2023 at the Ilearn Academy Gymnasium in Dededo, Guam.

"Seeing our youth, teens, adults, and seniors accomplish their goals at our dojo is inspiring. I love seeing the students grow together as a whole, promoting self-respect, discipline, self-control, and self-defense," he said.

The youngest student in the group, Josef Michael Yue Yang, 7, felt so good and couldn't contain his joy after earning his yellow belt that he proudly brought the belt to school the next day to share his achievement with his classmates.

Chlarson, who had his yellow



NHORLEEN BITCO-LILLES

Martial arts students give their best kata moves during karate belt testing at the CNMI Martial Arts Academy of Self-Defense.

belt for two decades after pausing his karate training at the age of 9, recently resumed his practice and now has a green belt to show for it.

He expressed immense satisfaction in finally attaining the next belt in his martial arts journey and plans to continue where he left off. Chlarson has also represented the CNMI at the World Karate Organization Shinkyokushinkai Full Contact Karate Championship last March 6, 2024, and has placed third in the adult men's division.

The CNMI is carving out a reputation for fostering formidable karate talent, with Banez's dojo playing a key role. Boasting three back-to-back champions to date, it's clear that the dojo is becoming synonymous with producing strong fight-

ers in the martial arts arena. Their next stop is the WKO Shinkyokushinkai Full Contact Karate Championship in Japan in July this year.

"Presently, I'm preparing for The Japan International Dream Festival Karate Championship. I need to maintain

KAGES

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In the 9U boys long jump event, GTC's Tawheed Ullah leaped the farthest at 2.99m. Second farthest was Mount Carmel School's Benz Santos with a distance of 2.95m, and third was Brilliant Star School's Koen Poole at 2.84m.

As for KagES, they led four divisions—9U boys and 12U boys 200m, and 9U boys and 12U girls 60m races.

The 9U boys 200m was dominated by the Blue Marlins' Davirey Indalecio with a time of 32.38 for first overall. Second overall and second in Heat 3 was SIS' Gabriel Walsh at 34.17; and third overall and third in Heat 3 was WSR's Zane Fujihira at 34.45.

KagES' Ishmael Bhuiyan was first overall with his time of 32.21. Second overall was GTC's Orion Garde at 33.74, and third was KagES' Jahziah Salas at 34.08.

In the 9U boys 60m, Indale-



NHORLEEN BITCO-LILLES

Dennis Guo smiles as he receives his certificate from sensei Danny Banez after being promoted to yellow belt at the CNMI Martial Arts Academy of Self-Defense.

my performance and endurance while sharpening my karate skills and techniques," according to Diaz.

cio was once again the fleetest afoot overall at 8.93. Second overall was WSR's Richardson Mungwaath at 9.22, and third overall was WSR's Aaron Martino at 9.55.

Results of Friday's Group 2 events will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Elementary school girls race around the Oleai Sports Complex track and field during the NMA/PSS All-Schools Track and Field 2023-2024 last Thursday at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.

NMI

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The first game of the tourney ended in a 2-2 tie last Saturday. NMI was up, 1-0, after a goal by Markus Attao-Toves early in the eighth minute. The rest of the first went on without a peep from both teams, then Guam regrouped for a stronger second half.

Erwin Manibusan found an opening in the 48th minute to tie it up, 1-1, then teammate Samuel Stenson followed it up with in the 60th minute for a 2-1 lead. A case of mistaken identity by Guam's Nicolas Chargalauf gave the NMI team a lucky break in the 71st after he scored in his own goal to tie things up once more, 2-2.

The match ended in the 2-2 draw—with both teams exhausted from a start time with the sun high beaming down on them.

With Attao-Toves, Narvaez Jr., and Lizama in the NMI team were Mark Chavez, Monico Claridades, Cody Shimizu, Ruben Guerrero, Brian Lubao, Anthony Bergancia, Daniell Pablo,

Leland Deleon Guerrero, Dev Bachani, Casey Chambers, Edward Arriola III, Tristan Raho, Jerald Aquino, Andrew Sablan, Jonne Navarro, Anthony Austria, and Tyler Omelau.

With Manibusan, Stenson, Harmon, and Chargalauf in the Guam team were Josiah Jones, Jacob Toves, Jace Almandres, Levi Buckwalter, Micah Elwell, Nathaniel Graves, Sean Halehale, Takayuki Kobayashi, Donovan Moss, Malcom Ogo, Beau Perez, Jadyel Rink, CJ Sablan, Andrew Stenson, Shuntaro Suzuki and Gatbo Topasna.

Despite some errors and the hot weather during the first match, NMI head coach Konomo Suzuki said the team did well and finished with a tie.

As for their win on the last day, she said before their match, they had a team meeting where they discussed their previous mistakes and their new strategy. Afterwards, she said they were all on the same page and did really well with the execution that they discussed during their meeting.

"They were able to improve on their errors from the first

game. That was what I was really impressed with. They try to play for the team, not just individually," she said.

On the level of competition—even with it being just a friendly tournament, Suzuki said that the NMI's level is not below Guam's level. "The competition was really high intensity. I feel like we are really improving a lot. I know other country's levels are higher than us, so we still need to improve and work on a lot of things. We found that a lot of things need to be improved," said Suzuki.

Even with their win, she said that players told her that they can't be satisfied with the results because it's just a friendly match—to which Suzuki agrees. "As it is a friendly match, we need to raise our standards much higher and we need to catch up with other countries," she said.

As the NMI was the host, she said that they had the home team and home field advantage because a lot of supporters came out, which helped them a lot during the games. Suzuki is appreciative of all the sup-

porters—family and friends of the players, along with the NMIFA football family that came out on both nights to cheer the teams on.

Suzuki, who became a coach for NMIFA last September, thanked her fellow coaches and the players for accepting her into the team. "I have good chemistry with a lot of coaches and the players," said Suzuki.

For his part, Guam's head coach, Ross Awa said, "Our guys worked on dominating possessions, we just needed to work more on executions and strong finishes."

He then commended the NMI men's team "because even though these are just friendlies, they played with no letup. The intensity was there all throughout the game and they really pushed our guys hard."

He added, "We have lots of young guys on the team and it's good to give them more game time experience for future competitions outside Guam." This year, they will be preparing for the AFC U17 and U20 qualifiers.



NHORLEEN BITCO-LILLES

Sensei Danny Banez poses for a photo with his students during the promotion ceremony at the CNMI Martial Arts Academy of Self-Defense.



Rockets eliminated from playoffs as Mavericks win in OT.

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NMI men win 1, draws against Guam



NMIFA

NMI's Markus Attao-Toves, left, tries to defend a Guam player during their first day of games in the 2024 Marianas Friendlies tourney last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The NMI men's national football team players called up for the 2024 Marianas Friendlies tourney put their best foot forward against rival Guam and won one and racked up a draw last weekend at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The NMI team wrapped up the tourney with a 2-1 win last Sunday after a 2-2 draw last Saturday.

With a later and much cooler start time at 8pm and a productive meeting beforehand, the

NMI team came out onto the pitch with a vengeance and renewed vigor.

Ariel Narvaez Jr. drew first blood in the 6th minute and the NMI team held on to that lead throughout the first half. The

intensity on the pitch was palpable as even though it was a friendly match, the rivalry between the islands remained strong.

The NMI came out better and more effective this second time around and didn't make as many mistakes as they did in the first match. They extended their lead by one more after a goal by Paul Lizama in the 68th minute for a 2-0 game.

Guam tried to make a comeback in the later minutes of the second half, but could only come up with one more goal in the 74th minute by Curtis Harmon. When time ran out, the NMI team and spectators exploded into cheers as they grabbed a victory against their archrivals.

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NPJC underway, NMI netters notch wins

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



The renamed North Pacific Junior Championships got underway yesterday at the American Memorial Park and Pacific Islands Club Saipan tennis courts, with NMI netters notching wins in various divisions.

At press time, NMI won six matches in the boys 16, three in the girls 16, three in the girls 14, and two in the boys 14 divisions.

To get things going, the NMI's

Henry Choi faced off against teammate Kiwon Lee in the boys 16 division. In

a dominating performance by Choi, he silenced Lee and won, 6-0, 6-0. At the same time, NMI's Si Woo Lee took on

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI's 16U netters pose for a group photo with coaches Jeff Race, far right, Colin Ramsey, far left, and Moris Villanueva, wearing a grey T-shirt, at the American Memorial Park tennis courts yesterday at the start of the North Pacific Junior Championships.

KagES, GTC, lead ES athletics Group 1

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School Binadus and Kagman Elementary School Blue Marlins of Group 1 lead the elementary school division Event A of the NMA/PSS All-Schools Track and Field 2023-2024 after Meet 1 last Thursday at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.

Event A consists of the 60m, 200m, 800m, and the long jump.

The Binadus placed first in five divisions—9U girls 200m, 9U girls 60m, 9U boys 800m, 12U boys 800m, and 9U boys long jump.

GTC's Molli Camacho was first overall in three heats of the 9U girls 200m with a time of 36.67 seconds. Second overall and first place in Heat 1 was Saipan International School's Olivia Walsh at 37.27 seconds.

Third overall and first place in Heat 2 was GTC's Seraphina Alvarez at 37.74 seconds.

In the 9U girls 60m, GTC's Alvarez was first overall with a time of 10.30 seconds. Second overall and first in Heat 1 was William S. Reyes Elementary School's Rhiem Hernandez at 10.78 seconds. Third overall and first in Heat 2 was Kag-ES' Teuila Ogumoro at 10.94 seconds.

In the 9U boys 800m, GTC's Oshean Garde sprinted first with a time of 3:12.43, followed by SIS' Ezra West at 3:14.24, and third was WSR's Nicobert Bailas at 3:19.43.

GTC's Orion Garde claimed first in the 12U boys 800m with a time of 3:04.42; second was SIS' Jake Duenas at 3:11.37; and third was WSR's Chauncey Manglona with a time of 3:27.33.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Elementary school girls track and field participants wait at the start line during the start of the NMA/PSS All-Schools Track and Field 2023-2024 last Thursday at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.